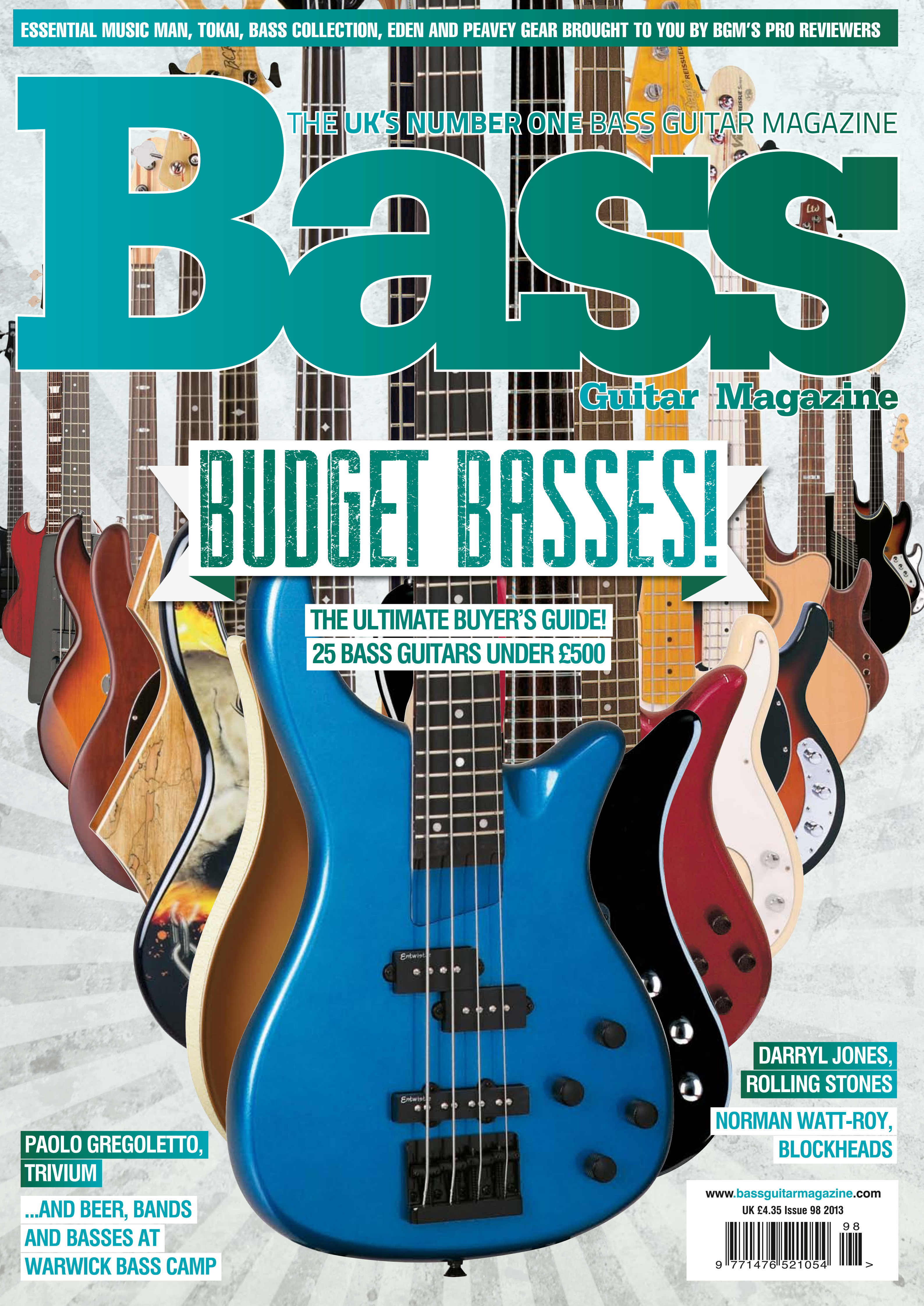
ESSENTIAL MUSIC MAN, TOKAI, BASS COLLECTION, EDEN AND PEAVEY GEAR BROUGHT TO YOU BY BGM'S PRO REVIEWERS

THE UK'S NUMBER ONE BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE

Bass Guitar Magazine



BUDGET BASSES!

THE ULTIMATE BUYER'S GUIDE! 25 BASS GUITARS UNDER £500

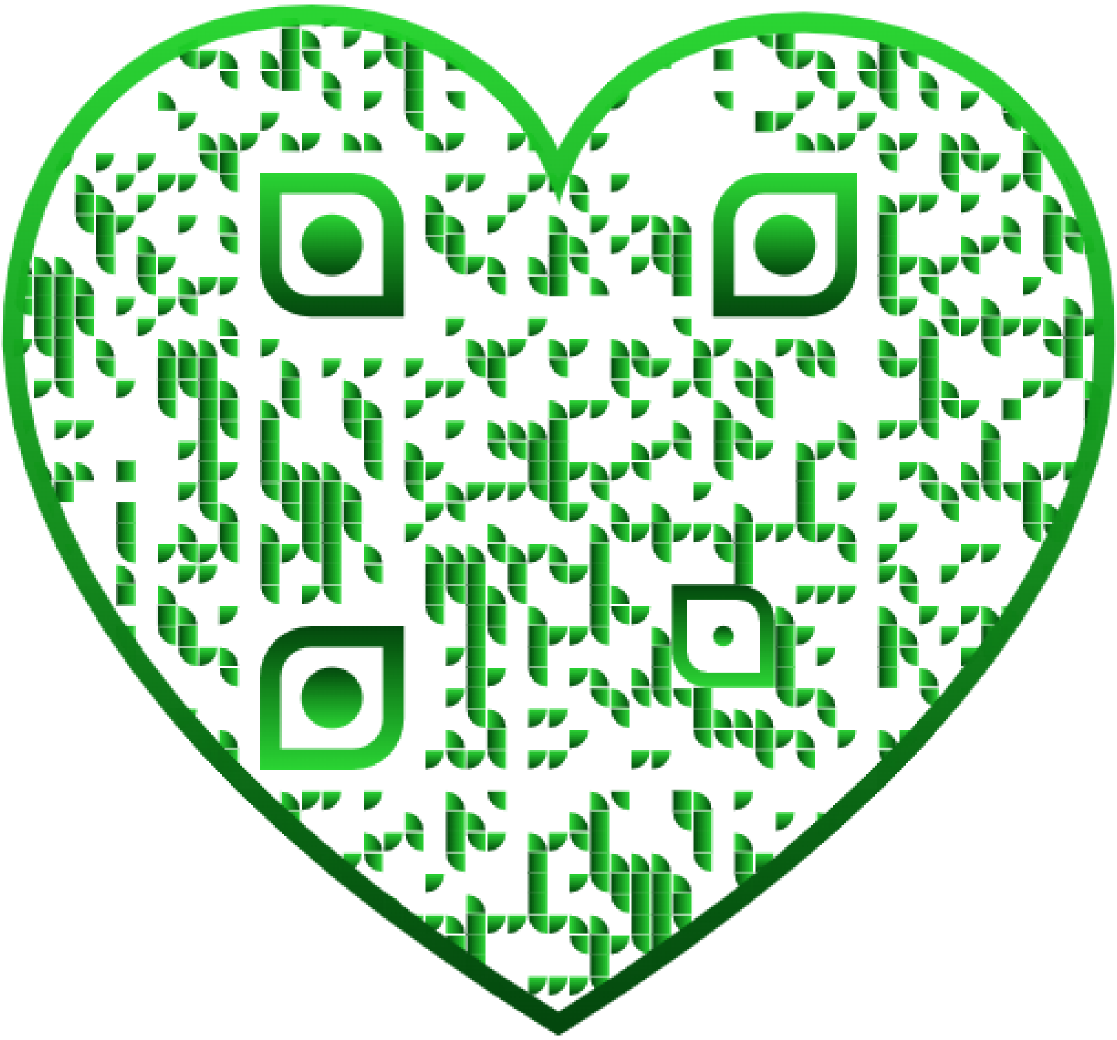
DARRYL JONES, ROLLING STONES

NORMAN WATT-ROY, BLOCKHEADS

PAOLO GREGOLETTO, TRIVIUM

...AND BEER, BANDS AND BASSES AT WARWICK BASS CAMP

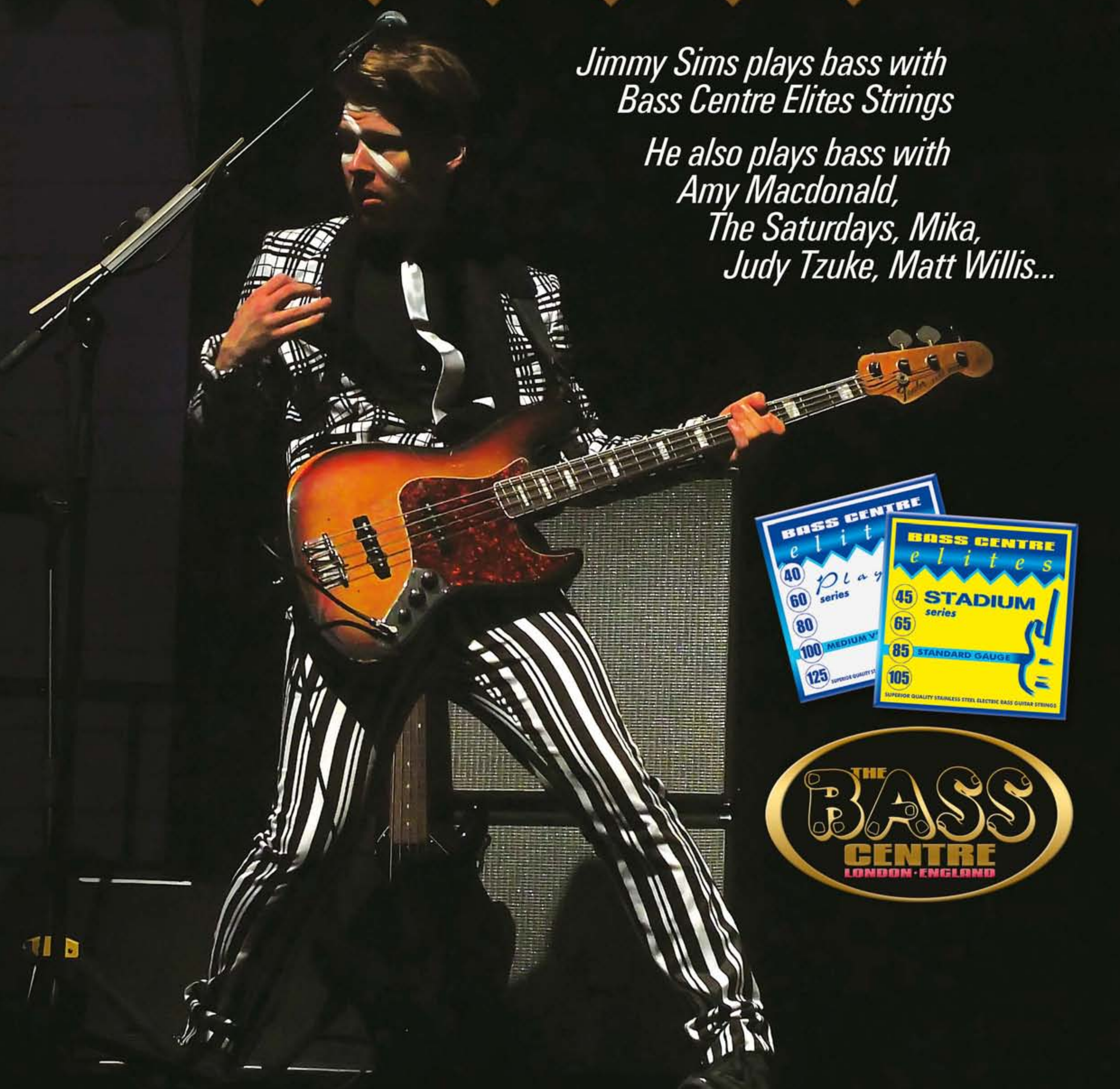
www.bassguitarmagazine.com
UK £4.35 Issue 98 2013



BASS CENTRE *elites*

Jimmy Sims plays bass with Bass Centre Elites Strings

He also plays bass with Amy Macdonald, The Saturdays, Mika, Judy Tzuke, Matt Willis...



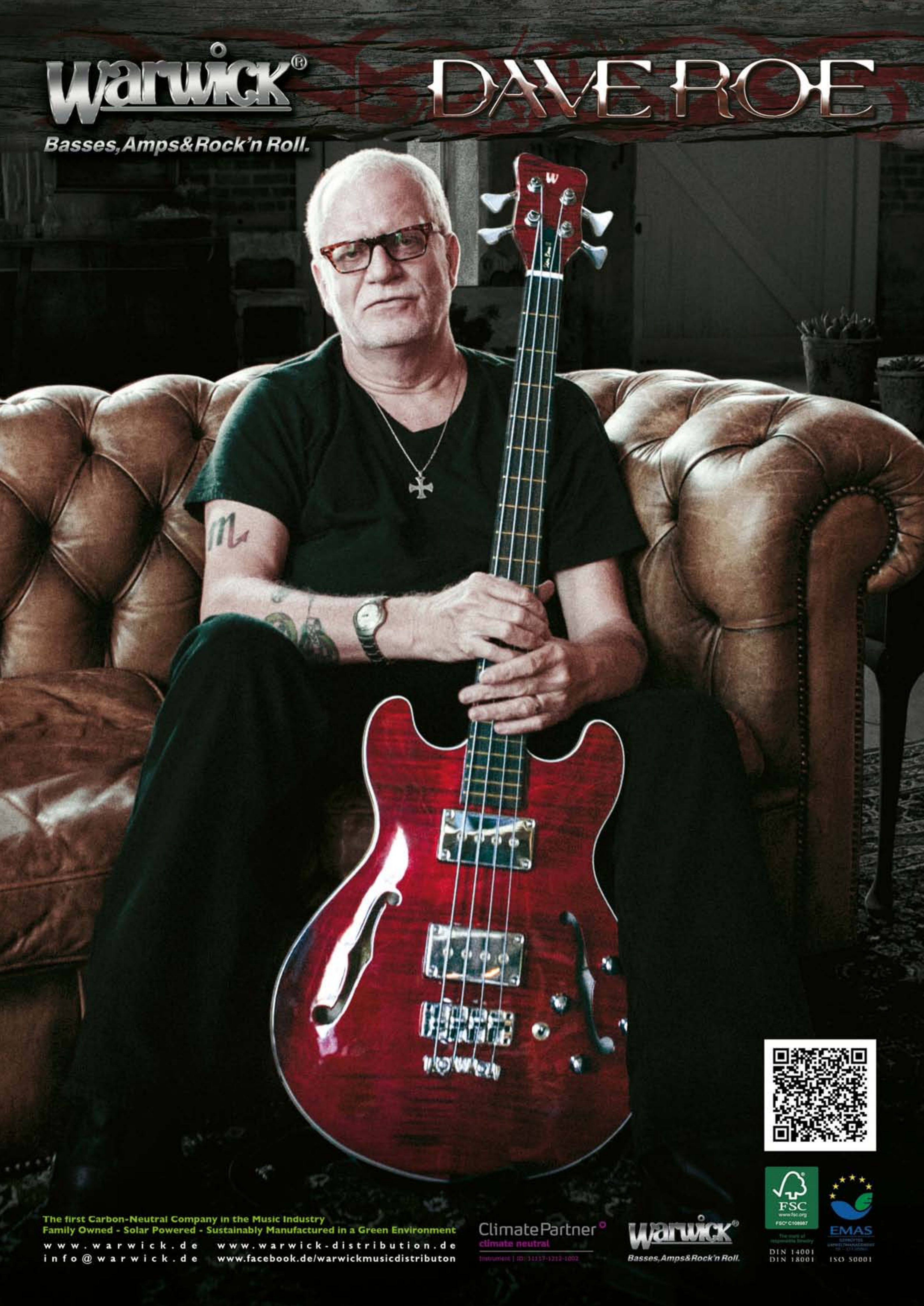
WWW.BASSCENTRE.COM

When you see the famous Bass Centre 'fingers & thumbs' logo, you can be guaranteed bass expertise, excellence & experience from over a quarter of a century.

AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD MUSIC STORES

Photo: Priscilla Wauters

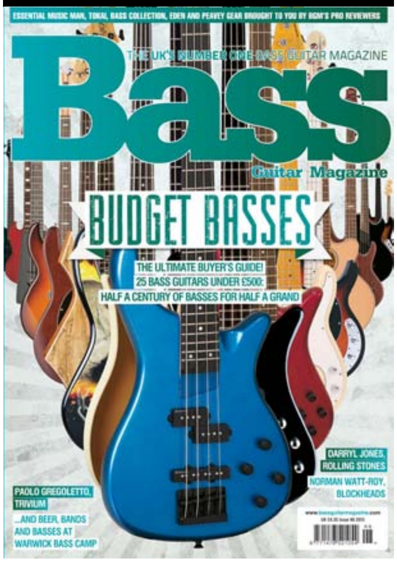
follow Jimmy on Twitter - jimmyplaysbass



Warwick
Basses, Amps & Rock'n Roll.
DAVE ROE
The first Carbon-Neutral Company in the Music Industry
Family Owned - Solar Powered - Sustainably Manufactured in a Green Environment
www.warwick.de
www.warwick-distribution.de
info@warwick.de
www.facebook.de/warwickmusicdistributon
ClimatePartner
climate neutral
Warwick
Basses, Amps & Rock'n Roll.
FSC
www.fsc.org
FSC C108987
DIN 14001
DIN 18001
EMAS
ISO 50001

CONTENTS

ISSUE 98 DECEMBER 2013



Editor Joel McIver, joel@blazepublishing.co.uk
Sub-editor Nick Robbins
Contributors Bob Battersby, Duff Battye, Andy Baxter, Jeff Berlin, Mike Brooks, Tiffany Burow, Dave Clarke, Stuart Clayton, Ben Cooper, Joe Daly, Jon D'Auria, Rares Diconu, David Etheridge, Mike Flynn, Paul Geary, Ian Glasper, Joel Graham, Ruth Goller, Spencer Grady, Paolo Gregoletto, Chris Hanby, Mike Hine, Andy Hughes, Ken Hunt, Ben Jones, Alun Lower, Dave Marks, Michael McKeegan, Andrew McKinney, Chris Mugan, Stewart McKinsey, Greg Moffitt, Ellen O'Reilly, Franc O'Shea, Harry Paterson, Raz Rauf, Steven Rosen, Kevin Sanders, Rob Statham, Jack Stevens, Freddy Villano, Alex Webster, Sam Wise
Graphic Design Steve Dawson
Ad Design Anna Makwana
Studio Photography Eckie, Jon Robinson-Pratt
Advertising Neil Golding neil@blazepublishing.co.uk
Operations Director James Folkard
Assistant Publisher Ruth Burgess
Publisher Wes Stanton
Accounts Kimberley Robinson
Subscriptions subs@blazepublishing.co.uk, 01926 339808
Subscription rate UK £64.20
For all subscription offers and overseas prices visit www.bassguitarmagazine.com or call 01926 339808
Printed in the UK © Blaze Publishing Ltd 2013.
All Rights Reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, stored in a retrieval system or integrated into any other publication, database or commercial program without the express permission of the publishers in writing. Under no circumstances should this publication and its contents be sold, loaned out or used by way of trade, or stored or transmitted as an electronic file without the publishers prior written approval.
Disclaimer
While Blaze Publishing Ltd prides itself on the quality of the information its publications provide, the company reserves the right not to be held legally responsible for any mistakes or inaccuracies found within the text of this publication.
Bass Guitar Magazine is an independent publication and as such does not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of manufacturers or distributors of the products contained within. All trademarks are acknowledged.
Distribution
Distributed to the news trade by Comag Magazine Marketing, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB7 7QE
Published by
Blaze Publishing Ltd. Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5SZ
***Bass Guitar Magazine* is proud to support the Music Industries Association.**
blaze PUBLISHING
mia Music Industries Association

The world today is not what it was. No one – government or individual – has money to spare. The clouds of recession have been lingering over the planet for so long that we'd better start building an ark soon or risk drowning in a sea of unpaid bills. Okay, maybe things aren't that bad for most of us – but there's never been a better time to be careful with your hard-earned readies, whether you're a gazillionaire with a mansion in Kensington or as poor as a church mouse. But you should still be able to get a decent bass without causing your bank manager a coronary event, and thanks to our ace guide to basses under £500 – appearing just in time for your Christmas shopping spree – indeed you can. Thanks to modern manufacturing technology, you no longer need to accept a substandard instrument for a merely reasonable outlay, so go on, give our 25-strong list a whirl.

As always we want to give you as wide a range of coverage in the magazine as possible, so we've also featured reviews of expensive gear – did that Music Man pricetag really say £2000-plus? – and eminently affordable items (hello, Eden and Peavey!). The same approach applies to our tuition section, where bass players of the most advanced technique will find themselves challenged just as much as beginners who are looking to get started on this, the coolest of all musical instruments (hey, we know the truth even if the guitarist in your band doesn't). On which note, say hello to our awe-inspiring new columnist Alex Webster: heavy metal maniacs will be long familiar with Alex's insanely evolved bass chops, while anyone new to the Webster approach is bound to be converted by his intermediate theory column.

Enough from me. Enjoy our new issue, and we'll see you at the London Bass Guitar Show in March.

Joel McIver, editor

BASSISTS

18 ASK BEN
The mighty Ben Cooper is here to answer your bass-related queries

20 THE MU PAGE
Diane Widdison of the Musicians' Union reflects on careers in bass teaching

22 BUDGET BASSES: THE ULTIMATE BUYER'S GUIDE!
You may not wish to admit it, but Christmas is coming. At the same time, the world is broke. What's a bass player to do? Stop buying basses? We say hell no! With the aid of Ben Cooper's superlative guide to 25 basses available for less than £500, you'll be able to bag yourself a bass that will still sound killer without breaking the bank. Credit cards at the ready...

31 DARRYL JONES
The perennial Rolling Stone reflects on his life and career with Andy Hughes

34 WARWICK BASS CAMP
We sent Bob Battersby to Warwick HQ in rural Germany for a week of playing bass, drinking beer and meeting a stellar cast of celebrities. Unsurprisingly, he came back with some juicy stories...

39 DAVE RICHMOND
Christopher Budd gets all nostalgic with the session ace Dave Richmond

40 NORMAN WATT-ROY
Bass expert Andy Baxter quizzes the veteran Blockhead on his prize P-Bass

44 PAOLO GREGOLETTO
Trivium's bassist reveals the tricks behind his band's amazing new album

TECHNIQUES

68 THE FRONT LINE
Our four-bassist team advises you on how to make it in the world of the low frequencies

72 BEGINNING BASS
Jack Stevens is in the Circle Of Fifths again. Will he ever come out?

74 PAUL GEARY
Session slapper Geary looks at hammer-ons and how to nail them. Geddit?

76 ALEX WEBSTER
New columnist Alex, from death metal monsters Cannibal Corpse, debuts with a look at stacked thirds

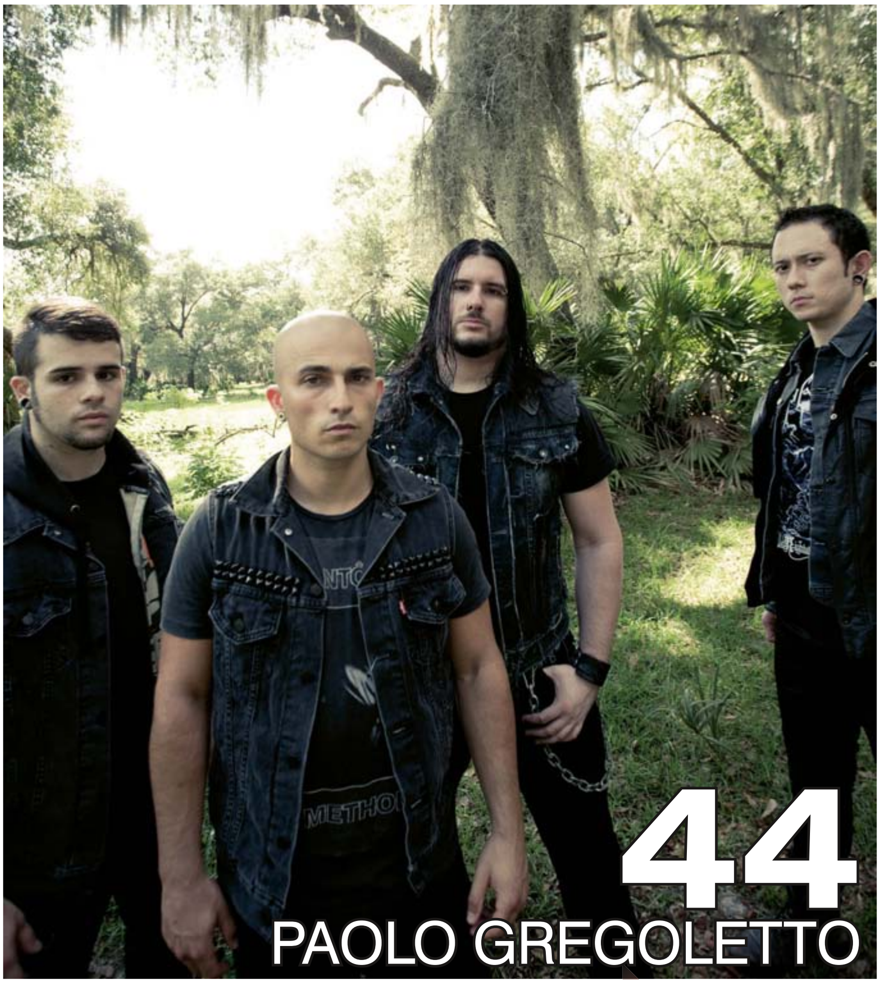
78 ROB STATHAM
Metric modulation, we hear you say? What the deuce is that? Rob explains

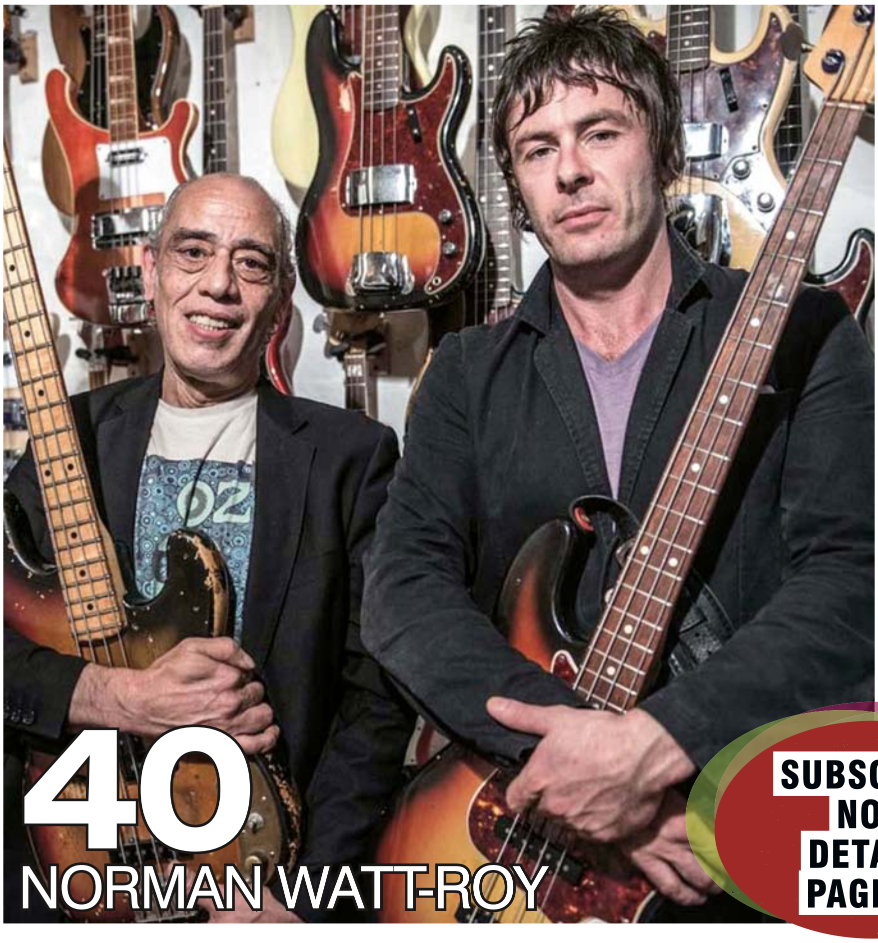
82 FRANC O'SHEA
Advanced "chordal madness" from bass Terminator Franc. His words, not ours

84 DAVE MARKS
Ready to shred? Of course you are, says fast-fingered Marks

86 UPRIGHT CITIZEN
Double bass warlock David Etheridge extends his range

88 KEV SANDERS
This month Kev salutes the great, and sadly late, Thin Lizzy frontman Phil Lynott





GEAR

46 MUSIC MAN CLASSIC SABRE
Stuart Clayton gets his mitts on two grand's worth of razor-sharp Sabre

51 TOKAI JAZZ SOUND
It's a Jazz, but not that kind of Jazz. Joel Graham road-tests the ultimate copy

56 BASS COLLECTION PORTRAIT
Is this budget BC as pretty as a picture, asks Joel McIver?

58 EDEN I-90 BASS CHORUS
We stomp on Eden's new chorus. Will it recover?

61 PEAVEY MAX COMBO SERIES
Kev Sanders drives this meek and mild combo range into the ground and surveys the results

66 THE WOODSHED
Martin Sims of Enfield Basses invites BGM into his secret lab

SUBSCRIBE NOW
DETAILS PAGE 80

THE LOW DOWN

News and views from Planet Bass, brought to you by *BGM's* intrepid team of roving reporters

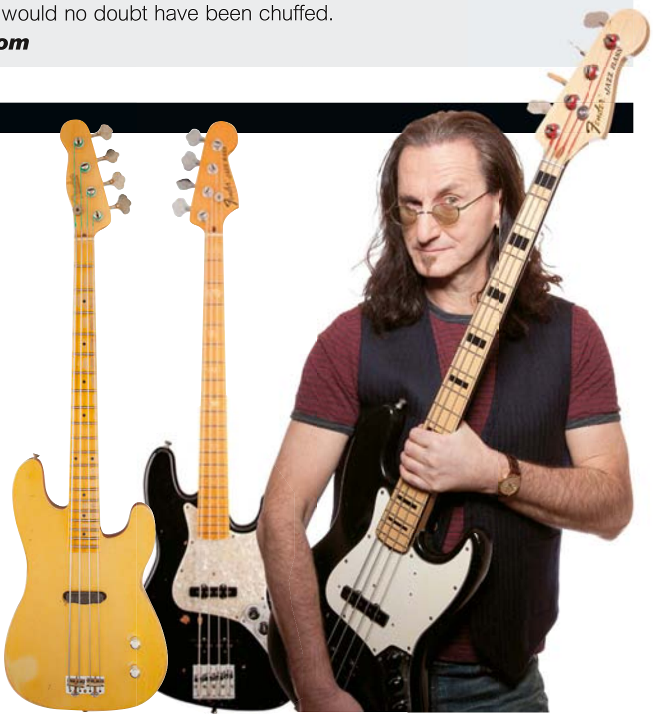
LA BELLA VITA

Double bass players, take note: La Bella Strings have announced a revamped Double Bass Nylon Tape Wound Series as well as a new product, the 7710T White Nylon Tape Wound set. Developed with Ron Carter and Attila Zoller, the tapewound strings are said to capture the rich tone of gut and sustain of steel, but "without the headaches of gut and overly metallic sound of chrome". The 7710T strings are wound with a clear proprietary nylon to create a smooth-to-the-touch string with brighter tone and clarity than the original 7710N strings, La Bella tell us. The late, great James Jamerson, a double bass player before his P-Bass years and a lifelong La Bella user, would no doubt have been chuffed.

Info: www.labella.com

FRANKLY SPEAKING

The London Bass Guitar Show, in association with *Bass Guitar Magazine*, is delighted to announce the appearance of Anthrax bassist Frank Bello at the show, taking place at London's Olympia venue on 1 and 2 March. Frank, a long-time member of the veteran New York metallers, is renowned for his clinics and will be delivering a gobsmacking performance if his previous form is anything to go by. More stars will be announced shortly: get your tickets and info from www.londonbassguitarshow.com. See you there!



RUSHING UP THAT HILL

The Fender Custom Shop recently announced two eminently droolworthy signature artist series bass guitars. The first, the Limited Edition Geddy Lee 1972 Jazz, is based on the Rush singer's original black 72 J-Bass, purchased around 1977 from a pawnshop in Kalamazoo, Michigan for $200. Used on many hits throughout the 70s, the bass was retired through Rush's mullet years, but returned in 1993 for the *Counterparts* album. Lee is said to have fallen in love with his Jazz tone and feel all over again and it remains his number-one bass on all Rush albums and tours. The new Fender replicates the wear and tear of nearly 35 years of touring: additional features include a nitrocellulose-lacquered alder body, maple neck with a custom oval C back shape, bound maple finger-board with a 9.5" radius and medium jumbo frets, custom '75 hand-wound single-coil Jazz Bass pickups and Leo Quan Badass II bridge.

Equally tasty is the Limited Edition Gold Top Dusty Hill Preci-sion, the bearded country legend's signature P. With a custom designed Seymour Duncan pickup, unique custom neck shape, and rear routed controls, the Gold Top Limited Edition is limited to a run of 50. The bass features an okume body with binding on the top and a unique nitrocellulose lacquer metallic gold fin-ish. Check out that reversed headstock.

Info: www.fender.com

HEAD FOR HOME

Anyone booked in to see Motörhead in the UK or Europe this winter will be disappointed at the news that the veteran rockers' tour has been cancelled as we go to press. Frontman and bass legend Lemmy is still suffering the after-effects of a nasty haematoma (a pool of leaked blood that gathers in your muscles, sometimes fatally) as well as Type 2 diabetes. As the 68-year-old Greatest Living Englishman told *Classic Rock* magazine, "I've been poorly. There's no point lying about it or trying to deny it. I've never done that. It's all part of life's rich tapestry, isn't it? I understand you've got to ask. And I'm feeling better."

The great man has reined in his legendary lifestyle recently, he revealed. "I was having breakfast one morning, coughing and hacking my way through a cigarette and I stopped and thought: 'What am I doing here?'... I stopped drinking Jack Daniel's and Coke because the sugar in the Coke wasn't good for my diabetes. I don't drink much any more… But I can still stand at that mic every night and play my songs."

Asked if his illness this year has made him more aware of his own mortality, Lemmy said: "Death is an inevitability, isn't it? You become more aware of that when you get to my age. I don't worry about it. I'm ready for it. When I go, I want to go doing what I do best. If I died tomorrow, I couldn't complain. It's been good." What a man.

REVOLVER

Every month we tell you the bass-line we can't stop listening to

This Month: 'WRATHCHILD'

Bassist: *Steve Harris*

Album: *Killers, Iron Maiden*

There's a rough, almost punk edge to Iron Maiden's first brace of albums, something that then-vocalist Paul DiAnno's gruff and limited vocals suited perfectly. This stunning track from their second album, which still makes it into live sets, has all that punkish energy rippling beneath the surface of its sub-three-minute run time. Steve Harris's hammer-on riff is a thing of beauty that will test your dexterity and stamina, like all his best work. During the solo breaks there are some impressive fills under the wailing guitars, and the 'very metal' key changes before the final verse make this possibly one of Maiden's most impressive tunes.

TRIUMVIRATE

We select three essential albums from a genre or player. ***This month:***

KIP WINGER

1 SONGS FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR BY KIP WINGER

Forget the rubbish that's trotted out about Kip, that he was some pretty-boy poser who made it on looks alone at the end of the hair-metal wave. If you need convincing, listen to this album, a collection of songs that deal with his grief over losing his wife in a car accident. The bass is mixed well to the fore throughout and the growling fretless pulse of 'Cross', plus its tasty solo, should be enough to prove that the man has serious bass chops.

2 PULL BY WINGER

When Winger released this album in 1993, the band took a more direct hard rock approach to their sound, With the meaty riffing of 'Blind Revolution Mad', Kip powers the band along, never letting the pace drop, doubling guitar riffs with ease. The album's best track by far is the muscular rocker 'In My Veins'. Check out Kip's tone, it's flippin' massive – and his bass is as tight as a nun's proverbial. Of course, there are more tender moments, and the little bass solo on 'Who's The One' is a rare spotlight for his lead talents.

3 THIS CONVERSATION SEEMS LIKE A DREAM BY KIP

Kip's first solo album is a little gem that rewards repeat listening. The pulsing ostinato bass riff of 'Kiss Of Life', coupled with some melodic fills, kicks things off in fine style, while the ballad 'Endless Circles' sees some fine fretless work from Kip. What's noticeable about the album is how clear and huge the bass sound is throughout, but given that he was producing himself, it's no wonder he decided to mix it a little high.

MEET THE TEAM

A NEW SERIES IN WHICH WE INTRODUCE A *BGM* CONTRIBUTOR

KEV SANDERS

Basses A '62 Fender Jazz, Fender custom shop five-string, Fender FMT four-string Jazz, L'Arrivé six-string, 1952 Otakar Spidlen double bass, 1812 German Mittenwald double bass
Effects I have a cupboard full of old FX units which I occasionally use for recording, but nothing sounds as good a great bass straight into a good rig
Amps Markbass and Eden rigs and an Acoustic Image amp for the double basses
I started playing bass in... It feels like 2500BC, but it was actually 1978.
My first bass was... A Framus semi-acoustic.
My bass heroes are... in no particular order, Jaco, Ray Brown, Gary Karr, Steve Harris, Lee Sklar, Brian Bromberg, Bernard Edwards, Aston Barrett, Marcus Miller
Slapping the bass is ace/stupid, because... It's ace to slap well in the context of the song. It's pretty stupid to listen to…unless you're a bass player
The greatest bass player that ever lived is/was… Dragonetti. No, James Jamerson.
Say something profound here that will make all bassists go 'Whoa!' like Keanu Reeves.
No matter how good you are, there will always be someone who just doesn't dig what you do. If you do enough gigs and work for enough people, eventually you'll wind up on a stage or in a studio with them. Don't take it personally, just believe in what you do and do it as best you can.
www.kevsanders.com

WIN!

Thanks to all-round rock legend Bob Daisley, we have a signed copy of his new autobiography, *For Facts Sake*, to give away. In the book the great man spills the beans on the many and varied shenanigans that took place behind the scenes with legendary bands such as Ozzy Osbourne's Blizzard Of Ozz, Uriah Heep, Widowmaker and many more. To win this coveted tome, answer this question:

Who played guitar alongside Daisley on Ozzy's first solo album?

A Randy Rhodes
B Sandy Rhoads
C Randy Rhoads

Head to www.bassguitarmagazine.com/competition to enter. Closing date: 5 January.

WON!

The winner of a stunning Eve ProBass is John Harding from Gwent. Congrats that man, and thanks to all who entered.

ARMAND THE MAN

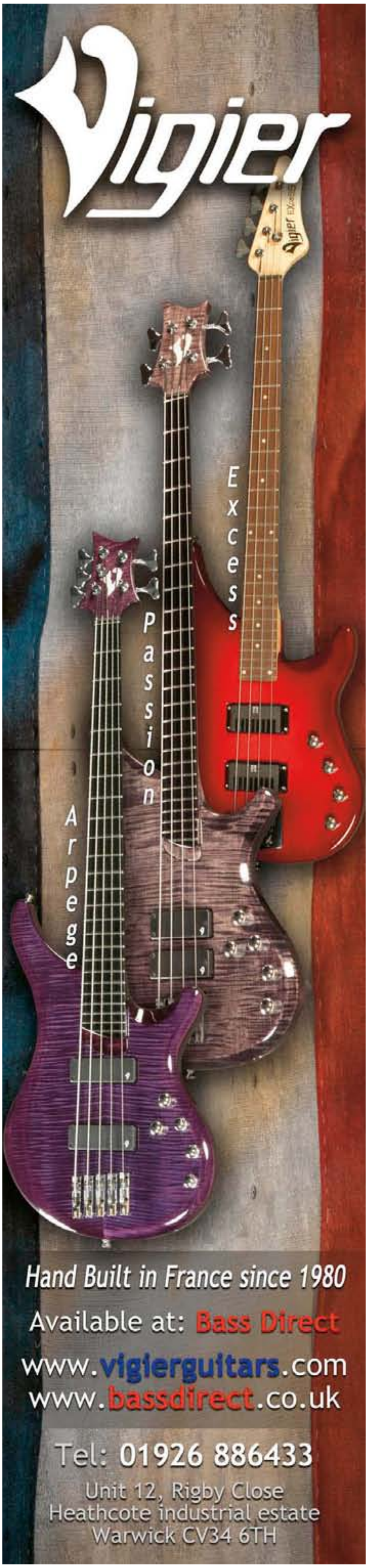
Fans of Armand Sabal-Lecco's virtuoso bass grooves will be pleased to hear that he will be headlining Yolanda Charles's Mamayo Session (www.mamayomusic.com) at the Islington on December 4 and Liverpool's Studio 2 on December 5. He'll also be appearing at the 606 in Chelsea as a guest of Stefan Redtenbacher's RB Funkestra on the 7th.

Born in Ebolowa, Cameroon, Armand has generated praise from an impressive list of high-profile artists including Sir George Martin, Peter Gabriel, Ringo Starr and Ziggy Marley. He received NARAS recognition for his outstanding work on the Grammy-awarded albums *Out Of The Loop* and *Return Of...* by the Brecker Brothers, Paul Simon's *Rhythm Of The Saints* and Alejandro Sanz's *Unplugged*. His most recent project, Positive Army, showcases his eclectic career as well as a tasty cast of international music luminaries.

For more info email: nickwellsasl@gmail.com

POCKET GROOVES

Several iPadded-up readers have been asking us where the digital tuition content is, so to get your extra fix of BGM, head to www.pocketmags.com (on your computer) or to the Play Store or iTunes (on your mobile device), search for Bass Guitar Magazine and there we are. Click, play and get even more of our lovely columnists. We promise they're well-behaved.



Bass restorer Simon McVeigh returns a knackered old Ovation to its former glory. This month: tackling the hardware

This Ovation is a bass with a big personality and a sound to match: both of these traits are at least partly due to the fact that almost every piece of hardware on this bass has been designed and made in-house by Ovation. Like it or loathe it, this Ovation is unique: there is nothing on it that you will find on any other brand of bass.

The Brazilian mahogany body is one solid piece of wood, and there is no join line to ruin the beautiful vista of the dark speckled grain. This wood is so good and the finish is so nice that there is no way that I am going to change it. I just want to polish it and bring back the original lustre to this gorgeous example of Brazil's finest timber.

I have never played a bass with such clarity in its low end as this one: it's got the warmest low tones that I've ever heard. Furthermore, these tones don't simply get muddled up into one big low-end rumble. It's the exact opposite in fact – each note sings with such clarity that you just feel so much in control of the instrument from the very first note you play. It's as if I've found one of the sounds that I have been searching for ever since I began playing the bass guitar all those years ago.

The first problem I had was with the D-string machine head, which had been bent at some point – probably due to a fall, or some other rock and roll antic. This was causing a clunking noise in the turning motion, which – besides looking terrible – was also affecting the preciseness and stability of the tuning, so I whipped it off and sent it to my colleague Matty Dread to look at. He sent it back as straight as an arrow and with a refurbished tuning mechanism, which is now as smooth as winding a Swiss watch.

One of the really interesting features on this bass is the neck pickup, which is Ovation's own design, of course. It's a big lump of chrome and if you look closely you will see four holes slightly offset from the string position. The pickup poles themselves are a staggered two-plus-two configuration, which sits above these holes. If you look even closer the four holes have a slot in them so that you can make fine adjustments with a screwdriver: this adjusts the individual volume (rather than the height) of the corresponding pickup pole, so you can boost the volume of any one string to be greater than or equal to the others. It's the type of feature that you would set once to cater for your own personal playing preferences, and then not have to go near again. I can think of all sorts of practical applications for it – especially in the studio.

Next month I will be sorting that broken pickguard and reinstating the twin inputs.

Costs this month: £10

Total costs so far: £360

Contact: simonmcveigh@eircom.net

Simon McVeigh has been a session bassist for over 20 years, and works as a bass tutor at the Royal County School of Music in County Meath, Ireland. He has recorded with many artists and runs www.breadheadmusic.com, a contacts resource for professionals in the music industry.

EDEN®
Bass Amplification
EDEN
E-SERIES
BASS COMBOS
A practice combo that can enhance your performance*
* All E Series combos have the Eden EQ shaping control to let you find your tone
www.edenamps.com
Eden is a part of the Marshall Amplification Group of Companies:
Denbigh Road, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire, England, MKI IDQ

THE BASS SCHOLARSHIP

Say hello to Rares Diaconu, the latest student to scoop a year's scholarship at the renowned Institute...

Hello bass players! I'm really happy to continue the work that my fellow Institute student Tiffany Burow and her predecessors did in *Bass Guitar Magazine* – and I hope I can rise to the high standards they set on this page.

I was born in Botosani, a small town in Romania, where I was lucky enough to grow up surrounded by music. I took up the bass guitar when I was about 14 years old, having played the acoustic guitar before that. I see studying at the Institute as a great opportunity to develop my bass playing and to perform in different live situations.

Listening to music has been such a big part of my life that I would like to kick my series off by mentioning a couple of albums that have impacted my way of thinking and playing the bass.

Maybe the first album that truly amazed me was Pink Floyd's *The Wall*, released in 1982. Although at the very young age at which I first listened to it I couldn't understand what the words meant, I was hypnotised by the emotional vocals and powerful bass-lines. As I grew up, the lyrics started making sense: they're still great food for thought, every time I play the CD.

When many people think of the bass guitar they think of Jaco Pastorius, so it's no wonder that another favourite album of mine is Jaco's *The Birthday Concert*, released posthumously in 1995. This was recorded in 1981, on Jaco's 30th birthday: he was joined on stage by awesome musicians such as Peter Erskine and Michael Brecker. From soulful tunes such as 'Continuum' and 'Three Views Of A Street' to the energetic 'The Chicken', this album covers a large array of emotions. I won't even mention Jaco's solos, which are, as you'd expect, miraculous.

The journey I'm embarking on at the Institute is really exciting, and I'm sure I will bump into some really good music along the way. Until next time, stay on the low frequency! ■

ERNIE BALL MUSIC MAN

THE INSTITUTE

GK GALLIEN-KRUEGER

MB SERIES
Bass Amplifiers

Glorious GK tone in a powerful, portable package that won't break your back (or the bank)

Exclusive UK distribution POLAR audio | www.polaraudio.co.uk | tel: (+44) 01444 258258

BASSICALLY SPEAKING

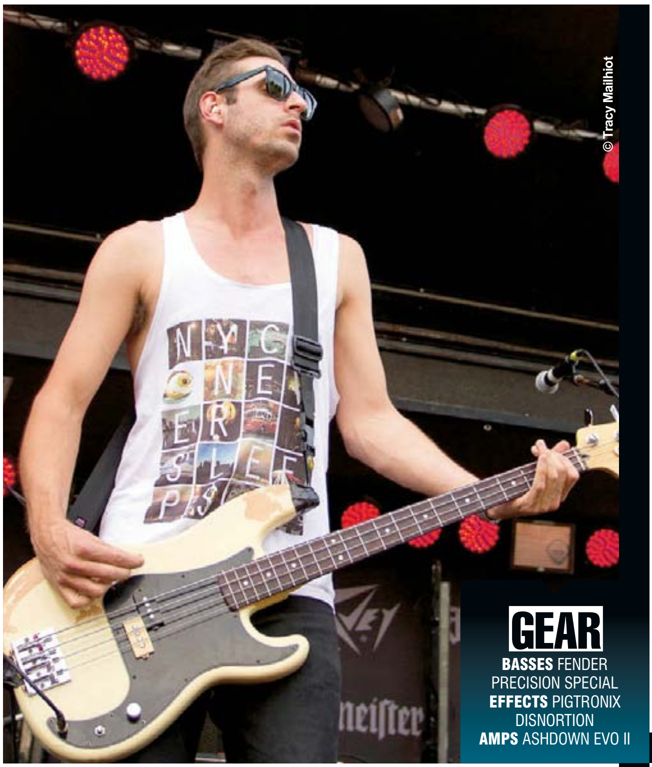
Low-enders of note talk to us about the lot of a professional bassist: gear, tunings, strings and tips. Listen up

JOEL HODGE, THE TRICKS

I do not play five- or six-string bass, because I sing lead vocals as well as playing bass. There is so much more to master on the four-string and creatively combine with my vocals. There may be a time and place in the Tricks that slap bass will fit, but at the moment the music we're creating doesn't require it. I'll save the slap for my solo project! The secret of playing bass well is enhancing the sound of the band; I believe the overall sound is the most important thing. My first bass was a Fender Jazz that I acquired from a friend. I stuck a mirrored scratch plate on there, inspired by Phil Lynott. My favourite bass ever to date is my Rickenbacker 4003 which was given to me as a gift when we were in Los Angeles. Now I want a Fender Deluxe Jaguar. Paul Simonon is my bass hero because there's a similarity in the way we came to playing bass. When we started the Tricks I was just a singer… but we needed a bass player so I taught myself to play so that the band could continue to develop. I've basically learned on the job much like Simonon did in The Clash. The greatest bass player that ever lived is John Paul Jones from Led Zeppelin. Have you heard his bass tracks isolated? There's some seriously impressive shit going down there.

www.thetricks.co.uk

GEAR
BASSES FENDER JAZZ, RICKENBACKER 4003
EFFECTS BOSS ODB-3 BASS OVERDRIVE
AMPS ASHDOWN MAG 300 COMBO



GEAR
BASSES FENDER PRECISION SPECIAL
EFFECTS PIGTRONIX DISNORTION
AMPS ASHDOWN EVO II

KYLE SHIMEK, AMERICAN FANGS

I would describe my bass style as Krist Novoselic attitude, low-end insight, and cautious destruction. I'm actually a drummer, so bass comes naturally. I've always been drawn to the bass, though. You have to allow the listener to know you're there in the mix. Although guitar is what you typically hear in our band, the bass is what you feel, and if I can find a way to pop in and out of those rhythms while keeping it musical, then I've done my job. American Fangs are a four-string bass band. When we started this band I already had an idea of what the bass should sound like. When we were recording, I actually purchased a set of five-string bass strings and immediately threw away the high G string and strung the remaining strings on to my four-string bass. The bass sounds fat and deep on our record for that reason. The secret of playing bass well is feeling where those pockets are in the song you're working on, and knowing when to fill out space and when to lay back. Less is more sometimes. But it also depends on what the song calls for. I usually listen to the drums and vocals and I let them tell me what to play. My first bass was an Epiphone Thunderbird. The greatest bass player that ever lived was Cliff Burton. Not only could he shred on a bass, I just loved his energy onstage.

www.theamericanfangs.com

JONAS REINGOLD, THE FLOWER KINGS

Since you cover both the rhythmic and the harmonic field, you should of course try to develop a good rhythmic awareness and a good melodic sense. If you can add a personal sound with a unique style, you're on the money. My first bass was a Rickenbacker 4001 which I spraypainted in metallic green. This was the 80s, and a plain wood finish was totally out of the question if you played in a hair metal band like I did. May those times never return again. My favourite bass ever to date is my Yamaha BB 3000: it used to belong to Glenn Hughes before I got it. I've done over 2,500 shows with the instrument and consider the bass my second wife. Later on I got several different basses, among them a 1964 Fender Jazz, but I always come back to my Yamaha, not because it's hip or anything: simply because she's my baby. My bass heroes are Jaco Pastorius, Ron Carter, Billy Sheehan, James Jamerson, Chris Squire, Paul McCartney, and Gene Simmons.

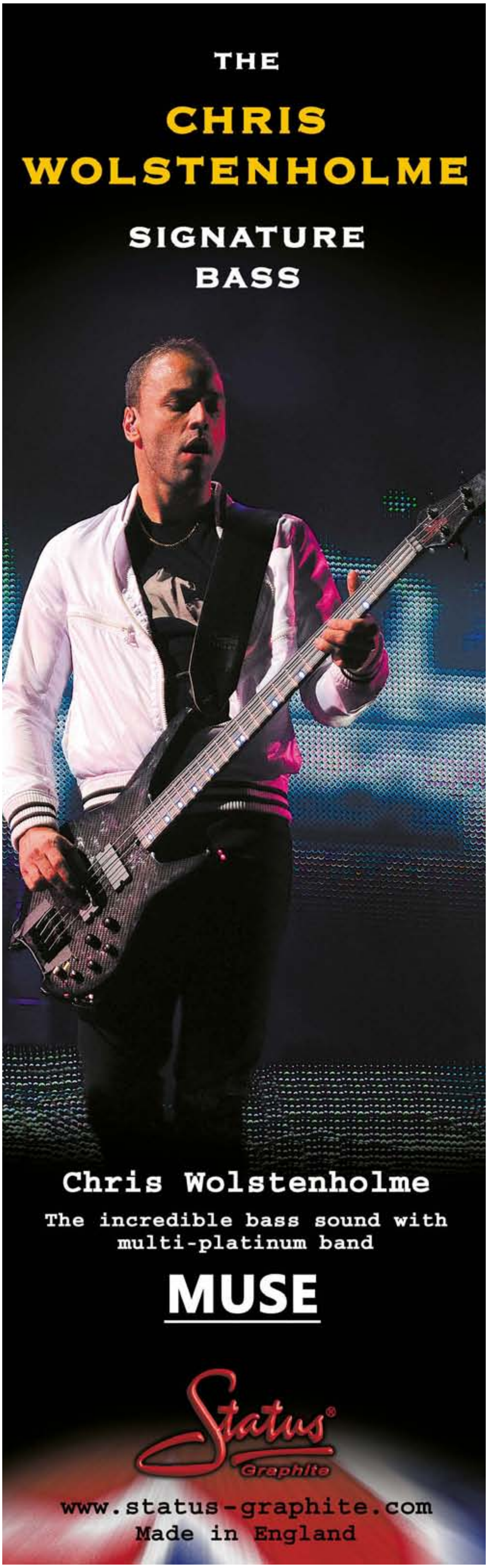
www.reingoldrecords.com

GEAR
BASSES YAMAHA BB 3000, FENDER JAZZ
EFFECTS EBS BLACK LABEL PEDALS, BASS POD LINE 6, LINE 6 DELAY
AMPS EBS FAFNER, EBS PROLINE 4X12 CAB

RYLEY WALKER, CAVE

My playing is rooted in the rock, funk and R&B of the 1960s and 70s. The musicians with whom I've collaborated over the years, in particular guitarist Morgan Burnham, have shaped my playing tremendously. The secret of playing bass well is developing not only technical ability but also a strong aesthetic sense. Trust yourself and love the music that you create. My first bass was a top of the bottom of line MIJ Fender Jazz with a cracked nut and broken jack covered in duct tape… the good old days when things were bad. My favourite bass ever to date is my 1989 Music Man Stringray. We've been together for 15 years and are pretty much joined at the hip. My bass heroes are Carol Kaye, Charlie Haden, George Porter Jr., Chris Squire, Donald Dunn, Cliff Burton, Leland Sklar and Holger Czukay. The greatest bass player that ever lived was Charles Mingus, an interminable force as a player, composer and bandleader. ***www.dragcity.com/artists/cave***

GEAR
BASSES MUSIC MAN STINGRAY, RICKENBACKER 4001
EFFECTS MXR BASS FUZZ DELUXE, EHX OCTAVE MULTIPLEXER, MXR FLANGER
AMPS AMPEG SVT 4 PRO, AMPEG 8X10", SUNN 1810, AMPEG B18 PORTAFLEX



GEAR

BASSES YAMAHA TRB6II, WESTBURY SINFONIA FIVE-STRING UPRIGHT, EASTCOAST EUB CUSTOM
EFFECTS BOSS BF-2B BASS FLANGER, DBX266L COMPRESSOR
AMPS ASHDOWN LITTLE GIANT 1000, ZOOT ZB212T CAB

MATT BROOKS, WILLE & THE BANDITS

My bass style is not what you would immediately expect in what a rock band. For a start I play upright bass as well and, having come out of the session world, my electric playing is pretty varied depending on the material. I've grown up playing mainly in soul, funk and jazz outfits and my playing definitely reflects this. I have a love of the flair that bass players infrequently get to show and when I do get the opportunity, I take it. Wille & The Bandits is a three-piece, this gives me a lot of room to experiment with my playing and I love bringing melody, chordal and solo aspects to a genre that doesn't always hear that from the bass. I play six-string bass and have done since quite an early age. I first saw one in the hands of Anthony Jackson who I believe was the first player to use one, and it was love at first sight. Seeing him fly up and down the huge neck with such tiny hands was amazing and the chord clarity he got alongside the tight punch of the low B was something I had to try. I love the freedom it gives me with a clear high register and a rumbling bottom. I slap very occasionally. Unless you're a wizard like Victor Wooten I think it can sound a little cheesy. I tend to use it only as a solo 'slap out' in the set, because it can get the crowd going but I find it really doesn't lend itself well to a rock setting.

www.willeandthebandits.com

JIM WARK, LONGREEF

I'm not a super busy player. I like to keep it simple and solid: our style of music doesn't call for crazy technical bass-lines. I really enjoy the simplicity of a fat solid bass-line that complements the song as best it can. I played four-string for years when I was younger and made the switch to five when I bought a Warwick Thumb. Straight away I loved it: having that extra string for the big boomy low stuff is great, and the wider fretboard and strings being a little closer together just feels right for me now. I find that being relaxed is really important. I remember when I was a kid, I would be so tense and squeezing the life out of the neck, so I really had to tell myself to relax and just play, and everything came so much easier. In relation to performance, I'm a big fan of less is more: knowing when not to play is just as important as when to play. The main focus for me is what works for the song. My favourite bass is my faithful Music Man Stingray 5. It just can't go wrong: it always sounds and feels great. I also have a Tomkins custom-made Australian bass, which I leave in the studio so it doesn't get beat up on the road.

www.longreefmusic.com

GEAR

BASSES MUSICMAN STINGRAY, TOMKINS AUSTRALIA CUSTOM
AMP EDEN WT800

KEVIN JEFFRIES, ROGER TAYLOR BAND

The secret of playing bass well is a good balance of theory and developing a great ear. Study lots of styles of music and play them with conviction. Seek out and play with the best musicians you possibly can. Aim to be an original and enjoy yourself in the process. My first bass was a Hondo II in brown... it sounded brown. I lent it to a girl for a school music evening and she shredded the back of it with her bullet belt. I'd never been happier and I think this ignited my love of old and battered instruments! My favourite bass ever to date is a 1970 sunburst Fender Jazz. It's got a Badass bridge and I run it through a Sadowsky outboard pre-amp. It was recently re-fretted by Mansons in Exeter. If I could get the bass tone of any album released I would choose *Black And White* by the Stranglers. I think I know how JJ got that sound, but I am not prepared to stick a screwdriver through my speaker cones!

www.rogertaylorofficial.com

GEAR

BASSES FENDER JAZZ, FENDER PRECISION, FENDER CORONADO II, TACOMA THUNDERCHIEF ACOUSTIC, NS UPRIGHT
EFFECTS SADOWSKY OUTBOARD PRE-AMP, EBS DYNAVERB, EBS BASS IQ, BASSBALLS, BOSS BASS SYNTHESIZER SYB-5, BOSS BASS OVERDRIVE, BOSS OCTAVE
AMP EBS HD 350 HEAD, PROLINE 410 CAB

SIM WHITE, THE MAYFIELDS

My style is, I guess, simplistically busy: the bastard offspring of Bruces Foxton and Thomas. I play mainly with a plectrum and occasionally with fingers but, as far as I am concerned, slapping is a dark art. I am in awe of the likes of Larry Graham and Flea, but slapping wouldn't work on anything I play. To play bass well, make sure you love what you're playing and who you're playing with, and try to add something to the song as a whole. The only people who will notice what you play as an individual are other bass players. My first bass was an unnamed Fender P copy, followed by an equally bad SG copy. Eventually I got myself a 1985 Fender P, which I still use today. It's pretty much my perfect bass, although the Custom Shop Relics look pretty good. I play it through a 25-year-old Vox Bass 100 combo, which does exactly what I need it to. As for favourite bass players, JJ Burnel stands out. It was the first time I noticed what the bass was doing as a separate instrument and is the reason I started playing. The likes of Graham Maby, Bruce Foxton, Paul Simonon, Bruce Thomas and David Steele are also big influences. Top of the pile for me, though, is probably John Entwistle. He just made everything seem so effortless – and what a sound.

STEVE DAYMOND, PAGAN HARVEST

I would describe my bass style as driving and melodic, but gentle and tasteful as required. The secret of playing bass well is to listen to others around you, feed off each other and try and improve what's there. Also don't forget the gaps are as important as the playing. My bass heroes are Andy Fraser, Chris Squire, Paul McCartney, James Jamerson, Jaco Pastorius, John Wetton, Norman Watt-Roy and Les Claypool. The greatest bass players that ever lived are Jaco Pastorius, Paul McCartney and James Jamerson. If I could get the bass tone of any album ever released, I would choose Joe Jackson's *I'm The Man*, where the bass player was Graham Maby.

www.facebook.com/pages/Pagan-Harvest

GEAR

BASSES FENDER JAGUAR
EFFECTS SANSAMP BASS DRIVER
AMPS TRACE ELLIOT, AMPEG 4X12 AND 1X15 CLASSIC CABS

Playing live, writing or recording?

Join us

theMU.org

Musicians' Union

mu

ASK BEN

Jeff Berlin is away this month, so who better to stand in than sometime *BGM* editor Ben Cooper?

Hi, I've recently started playing in a pretty loud pub rock band and I've been struggling to hear myself on gigs with my 100-watt combo. I traded it in and got myself a 300-watt amp plus a 4x10 8 ohm cab. However I still find that I have to push the amp, what's up with that?
Dave Smith

Thanks for your question, Dave. This is a pretty common issue, and although the best solution is to turn those damned guitarists down a bit we'll look at some practical solutions instead.

Without knowing the specifics of your amp I'd say that the issue here is that your head is probably rated at 300 watts into a 4 ohm load. Bass amps generally run at 8 ohms and 4 ohms, although some are rated as low as 2 ohms.

Usually the maximum power rating is achieved through a 4 ohm load, so if you run one 8 ohm cab the power your amp kicks out is reduced. You're probably getting about 180 watts instead of the full 300 watts.

If you run a second 8 ohm cab along with your 4x10], then you'll unlock the full power of the amp because two 8 ohm cabs will give you a 4ohm load. Always consult the manual first to see what load is safe for your amp, because you can damage your amp if you get it wrong.

I've started to dip my toe in the murky waters of bass effects. However I'm struggling to make decent sounds with them. A mate suggested that I'm not ordering them right, but does it really matter what sequence the pedals are in?
Graham Clark, Edinburgh

If your effects chain is making the sounds you want, then it doesn't matter if the order is logical, so in a way it doesn't matter how you order your units. That being said there are a few guidelines that you should consider when ordering your chain.

Some types of pedals don't perform at their best with a distorted signal coming into them, particularly wah pedals, so these should be at the front of the chain. Then you want pedals that create tone, so think distortion, overdrive and so on. Also, because these kinds of pedals amplify noise in the signal path it makes sense to have them early, so they don't amplify the noise of the other pedals – resulting in a mushy mess.

Next come tone-altering effects, which means anything modulation-based such as chorus, flanger or phaser. This is also where you'd generally put EQ pedals too. Then at the end of the chain you put delays and reverbs.

This set-up will give the best results for most people, but there's nothing to stop you messing around with this, and in fact you might find that some experimentation gives you those wild sounds you're after.

Ben Cooper is the former editor of *Acoustic Magazine* and *Bass Guitar Magazine*. His 17-year bass playing career hasn't made him much money, but his love affair with the low end continues. You can follow him on Twitter at @realrockmachine, but don't expect any words of wisdom.

GREATNESS COMES IN ALL SIZES

The new BG combo series builds on our smash success - the BG250 - and pairs ultra-lightweight design with pure playability. In addition to the 250 watts of raw power hailing from the original BG250, we've added a brilliant feature set, multiple speaker configurations and an intelligent EQ section. Rounding out the list of onboard goodies is a built-in tuner and TonePrint functionality. Oh, and did we mention they sound absolutely killer?

TonePrint® Artists

TonePrint® App

Available on the App Store

ANDROID APP ON Google play

tcelectronic.com/bg250-family

tc electronic®

THE MU PAGE

Do you want to teach? An increasing number of musicians in the rock and pop sector are embracing education work, as Diane Widdison reports…

Teaching is often a major part of a musician's portfolio career. But have you considered teaching to supplement your band or session work, and if so, do you know all you need to? The Musicians' Union's recent 'State of the Nation' survey revealed that 60 per cent of members are currently teaching, and the biggest area for growth is among members in the rock and pop sector who are embracing education work. Teaching can be a rewarding and enjoyable experience as well as being a regular source of income throughout a musician's often sporadic playing career.

The world of music education has moved on enormously in the past few years, opening up to embrace musicians from a wide range of backgrounds and experience. The investment in projects such as whole-class instrumental teaching and Musical Futures, as well as the work of organisations such as Access to Music and Rockschool, supports musicians to teach.

If you teach at home, in a studio or in pupils' homes, then cover against accidents is increasingly important. We often deal with cases where teachers are held responsible for incidents that occur in a lesson. In an increasingly litigious society, proper cover is imperative, so don't forget that as a self-employed instrumental teacher, public liability cover is vital.

We recommend that all teaching members have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, formerly a CRB check, or Disclosure certificate processed. The legislation has changed now so that a DBS check can be registered by the individual for a nominal fee, ensuring that the check is continually updated and therefore continues to be valid and is also portable for those teachers who work for multiple employers.

As well as getting checked, we recommend that musicians who teach are up to date with the legislation regarding safeguarding children. The MU offers Child Protection workshops in each region for members, covering best practice for instrumental teachers as well as how to minimise the risk of allegations and what to do if an allegation is made against you. We also have an online course which we developed with the NSPCC, called Safeguarding Children in Music. The course can be found at platinum.educare.co.uk/music and costs £15 plus VAT.

If you teach in an independent or state school, where your arrangement is with the pupils, make sure that you have a contract in place with both the institution and your pupils. Many instrumental teachers work without any contract in place, often for many years, only to find that they have no legal rights if the school wants to dispense of their services for no valid reason. The Union advice, as always, is 'get it in writing'!

Being an independent instrumental teacher can be very isolating, but the MU can help with both networking and training opportunities. We have a partnership with the largest online teaching database, MusicTeachers.co.uk, where MU members are able to kitemark their membership. *The Art Of Teaching*, which shares examples of good teaching practice, can be viewed at MusicTeachers.co.uk/YouTube.

If you are new to teaching, or not from an academic teaching background, and feel the need for a relevant qualification, consider Rockschool's Teaching Diploma, which was developed for musicians of all genres in conjunction with the Union. There is the initial diploma for those starting their career and the licentiate for more established teachers. There is also a new qualification, the Certificate for Music Educators, which has just been accredited to roll out in 2014, and both qualifications are specifically tailored towards musicians who want to get qualified while still working.

The MU aims to support members with their work in education, from starting up their teaching practice to providing advice and guidance for established teachers on issues surrounding their work. Members who teach can register with the Teaching Section of the MU and request a Teaching Pack, which contains advice leaflets, support material and contracts. It also includes support material such as lesson plans, report forms and a Practice Diary for pupils. If MU contracts are used, we will chase unpaid fees and take on cases where contracts have not been adhered to. Sometimes a carefully worded letter on MU headed paper gets the response needed, although we will pursue claims to court as well if necessary. As well as contracts, the MU teaching pack includes advice leaflets on professional behaviour, health and safety issues and your rights on holiday pay and the working time regulations. ■

Contact us at teachers@theMU.org for more information on how being a MU member can support your work as a teacher.

Diane Widdison is national organiser for teaching and live performance at the Musicians' Union.

ANDY BAXTER BASS .COM

THE UK'S LARGEST SELECTION OF VINTAGE BASS GUITARS.

SCRUTTON STREET, SHOREDITCH, LONDON, EC2A 4RX
T: +44 (0) 7904 227517, 0207 375 0331 EMAIL: sales@andybaxterbass.com

1961 FENDER JAZZ - BLONDE - STACK KNOB - *WAS £19,995 NOW £17,500*

1966 FENDER JAZZ - SUNBURST - *BOUND & DOT NECK* £6,450

1974 FENDER PRECISION - OLYMPIC WHITE - £2,250

1966 FENDER PRECISION - SUNBURST - *WAS £3,995 NOW £3,750*

1970/71 GIBSON EB3L - CHERRY - £1,695

1972/73 GIBSON EB3 - WALNUT - £1,695

1976 RICKENBACKER 4001 - OLYMPIC WHITE - £2,295

1973 RICKENBACKER 4001 - FIREGLOW - CHECKER BINDING - £3,295

NEW RICKENBACKER 4003 - FIREGLOW - £1,575 *CHEAPEST UK PRICE*

1979 MUSIC MAN STINGRAY - BLACK *WAS £1,995 NOW £1,695*

1961 AMPEG B15 - £1,995

1972 OLIVER B120 - £995

TO SEE MY FULL RANGE OF VINTAGE BASS GUITARS AND AMPLIFICATION PLEASE VISIT
WWW.ANDYBAXTERBASS.COM

TWITTER: @ANDYBAXTERBASS FACEBOOK: ANDY BAXTER BASS

BASSES ON A BUDGET

Christmas will be here soon, readers, but as we all know, there's a recession on. What the hell is a bassist to do? Relax – here's the ultimate guide to your first bass guitar, or if you need an affordable backup for your pricey pride and joy. Words: Ben Cooper

These days the sheer choice of instruments available to the bass-buying public is quite simply staggering. From a bewildering variety of Fender Jazz and Precision knock-offs, to seven-string fretless beasts that will set you back several thousand pounds, the choice on offer has never been broader. Yes sir (or madam), the days of "Would you like a Fender or, er... a Fender?" are well and truly gone.

One of the most competitive sectors of the market is the sub-500 quid zone, as it captures a wide variety of players, not simply beginners. The quality of instruments made in the east has taken quantum leaps in recent years, and with the much cheaper manufacturing costs associated with the workforce in that region, it's now possible to get a genuinely high-quality bass for well under the £500 mark. This means that even those of us lucky enough to own, say, an American-built deluxe Precision or a hand-built luthier's instrument, can choose instruments in this price bracket for a solid gigging workhorse or backup to our beloved bass. And it's not just the bog-standard garden variety four-string bass we're talking about, either. If you're looking to dabble in fretless or five-string bass, but don't want to shell out big money on one at first, then there are many options out there for you.

Due to the sheer quantity of instruments released by the multitude of manufacturers out there, browsing can be a daunting task, so we've collated a list in alphabetical order by manufacturer of 25 sub-£500 instruments that we feel are worthy of your attention. A feature like this can't hope to include everything out there, of course, and prices are obviously subject to change, so check before you buy...

BASS COLLECTION LIZZY BASS

£385

MANUFACTURER | Bass Collection
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | Korea
BODY | Basswood
NECK | Maple
NUT WIDTH | 41mm
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 20 x sixties style
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
TUNERS | Open gear
BRIDGE | Babicz Full Contact Hardware
PICKUPS | Proprietary
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Passive, 1 volume, 1 tone
HARDWARE | Chrome
FINISH OPTIONS | c/o Power Bass colour chart

No prizes for guessing where this instrument takes its cues from. Essentially a modification of Bass Collection's Power Bass, a Precision clone, the Lizzy bass has that classic P-Bass look with the added cool factor of the mirrored pick guard. The bass isn't just about looks though, with some serious design budget thrown into its tone circuit and neck. Sure this doesn't have the playability of a fully-fledge Precision, but there's no mistaking that super-cool look, which will transform the budding bass player into a Phil Lynott.

We love the black fingerboard finish, complemented by the silver hardware, and you've always got Bass Collection's reputation to rely on.

CONTACT | www.basscentre.com

BC RICH PAOLO GREGOLETTO SIGNATURE WARLOCK

£485

MANUFACTURER | BC Rich
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | China
BODY | Mahogany
NECK | Maple
NUT WIDTH | 43mm
FRETBOARD | Ebony
FRETS | 24 Jumbo
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
TUNERS | BC Rich Die Cast
BRIDGE | Adjustable Stop
PICKUPS | BC Rich BDSM Bass Humbuckers
CONTROLS | 2 volume, 1 tone
HARDWARE | Black
FINISH OPTIONS | Natural (Spalted)

If you're looking for an out-and-out metal machine then the Trivium bassist's signature model from the leading manufacturer of pointy basses and guitars, BC Rich, has to be the one for you. Its mahogany body and maple neck means this bass has plenty of guts, while the twin humbuckers will give you all the aggressive sounds you could desire.

The natural-style finish makes it a bit different from the usual black that is so strongly associated with BC Rich instruments, but this is still a headbanger's dream. We can't guarantee that you'll be transformed into a rock god overnight however.

CONTACT | www.rosetti.co.uk, 01376 550033, sales@rosetti.co.uk

DANELECTRO 58 LONGHORN
£399

MANUFACTURER | Danelectro
MODEL | Longhorn
BODY | Masonite, laminated wood frame
NECK | Maple, bolt on
BINDING | N/A
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 24
SCALE LENGTH | 30.5"
INLAYS | Dots
TUNERS | Kluson Style, cream plastic buttons
BRIDGE | Rosewood Bridge Saddle
PICKUPS | 2x Lipstick alnico magnets
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Dual Concentrics, Volume, Tone
HARDWARE | Chrome/Cream
FINISH OPTIONS | Copperburst

For pure retro charm the Longhorn has to rate near the top of the tree. With its short scale length, the Longhorn is an easy play and would be ideal for the smaller framed player, which is ironic in some regards given that the not-insubstantial John Entwistle used to play these basses in the early to mid-60s. The plywood body, topped with masonite, makes this instrument incredibly light, almost alarmingly so, and yet it still delivers high-quality tones from its passive lipstick tube pickups. Sonically the Longhorn isn't comparable to the usual suspects because it has a unique tone; the instrument has a cutting high-end sound, which must be why the Ox enjoyed it so much.

CONTACT | www.danelectro.com and www.jhs.co.uk/danelectroguitars.html

DEAN EDGE 10A PJ SKULL CRUSHER
£299

MANUFACTURER | Dean Guitars
MODEL | Edge 10A PJ Skull Crusher (Edge Skull Crusher)
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | China
BODY | Basswood
NECK | Maple
NUT WIDTH | 40mm
BINDING | N/A
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 22
SCALE LENGTH | 35"
INLAY MATERIAL | Pearl Diamond Shaped
TUNERS | Sealed Die Cast Black
BRIDGE | Die Cast Black
PICKUPS | DMT designed PJ Pickups
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Active 2 band EQ
HARDWARE | Black
FINISH OPTIONS | Skull Crusher

If you're looking for something understated and classic, then you'd best look elsewhere, as the sole finish option on this bass screams metal. The Skull Crusher offers fantastic value for money at just £299. You get the jack-of-all-trades pickups combination of a Fender Precision-style humbucker in the neck position coupled to a single coil Fender Jazz-style pickup at the bridge, meaning you can get deep and throaty rock tones, and added edge and punch from the bridge pickup. The Skull Crusher also features active electronics, with bass and treble controls, which at this price is really excellent value. It might not be to everyone's taste visually, but it certainly nails its colours to the mast.

CONTACT | www.deanguitars.uk.com sales@bill-lewington.com

ENCORE BLASTER
£159

MANUFACTURER | Encore
BODY | Solid Wuton tonewood, vintage comfort contoured
NECK | Vintage profile maple
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 20
SCALE LENGTH | 864mm
INLAYS | Dot
TUNERS | Guitar Tech chrome, with authentic 'Elephant Ear'-shaped keys
BRIDGE | Guitar Tech fully intonatable face-mounted with steel baseplate and individual saddles
PICKUPS | Guitar Tech split single coil
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | 1 x Volume/ 1 x Tone
HARDWARE | Chrome
FINISH OPTIONS | Right-handers: Black, Sunburst, Vintage White. Lefties: Black

If you want something cheap and cheerful for a knock-around bass, or perhaps if your kid is looking to take up the bass, then the Encore Blaster is the perfect solution. The general build quality is fine for the money, and it's certainly not going to break the bank. However, the Blaster also comes in a pack that, for £229, includes a 10-watt practice amp, a Qwik Tune Tuner, a Kinsman Carry Bag, a Kinsman Guitar Stand, a GYC Guitar Lead, a Guitar Tech Guitar Strap, an Encore Tutorial DVD, a pick and a tutor listing. That's a full beginner's set-up for less than most of the basses in this feature. While the instrument is basic, it's hard to think of a more cost-effective way for beginners to test the waters.

CONTACT | www.jhs.co.uk/encorebass.html

EPIPHONE EB3
£219

MANUFACTURER | Epiphone
MODEL | EB3
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | China
WEIGHT | 5kg
BODY | Mahogany
NECK | Mahogany, Set, Slim Taper D Profile
NUT WIDTH | 42mm
FRETBOARD | Rosewood 12" Radius
FRETS | 22, Medium Jumbo
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAY MATERIAL | Pearloid Trapezoid
TUNERS | Open Gear, Nickel Plated
BRIDGE | 3-Point
PICKUPS | Sidewinder HB (neck), NYT Bass Mini HB (bridge)
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | 2-Volume, 2-Tone, 3-Way Selector Switch
HARDWARE | Nickel
FINISH OPTIONS | EB, CH

The Gibson EB3 ranks right up there with the Fender Precision and Jazz in terms of iconic design. A big hit with players in the 60s, the EB3 had a thudding tone all of its own, thanks to the deep bass pumped out by the enormous neck position humbucker (which truly earns its name by being right up against the end of the fretboard), and the biting treble tones from the bridge position pickup.

The Epiphone version has the looks and sounds without the hefty price tag. A solid mahogany body makes this a relatively weighty bass, and its set neck construction gives it plenty of sustain.

CONTACT | www.epiphone.com

FRESHMAN FA1BN

£359

MANUFACTURER | Freshman Guitars
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | China
WEIGHT | 2.75kg
BODY | Jumbo Cutaway – A Grade Canadian Sitka Spruce Top, Mahogany Back and Sides
NUT WIDTH | 43mm
BINDING | ABS binding
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 22
SCALE LENGTH | 32"
BRIDGE | Rosewood
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Fishman Isys 201 System
HARDWARE | Nickel Machine Heads
FINISH OPTIONS | Natural/Black Gloss

Well, if we actually had summers to speak of here in the UK, the Freshman FA1BN would be the ideal beach party bass: grab a couple of acoustic guitar strumming pals and regale your friends with some Jack Johnson covers as the sun dips below the horizon. Of course, given the usual hammering rain there's not much chance of that, but the FA1BN is still perfect for those acoustic moments. Its generous jumbo body shape means that the bass resonates well acoustically, aided in no small part by the A grade solid Sitka spruce top. The addition of a Fishman iSys pickup system means the plugged-in sound is great too. The iSys features a built-in tuner, which works extremely well, and a phase switch for tackling the feedback that can plague amplified acoustic instruments when played at volume.

CONTACT | www.freshmanguitars.co.uk

GRETSCH G2220 JUNIOR JET BASS II

£287

MANUFACTURER | Gretsch
COLOUR | Black
BODY | Basswood
FRETS | 20
FRET SIZE | Medium Jumbo
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
NECK MATERIAL | Maple
SCALE LENGTH | 30.3"
HEADSTOCK | Jet Style
PICKUPS | Gretsch Mini Humbucking Bridge, Gretsch Mini Humbucking Neck
CONTROLS | Master Volume, Master Tone
HARDWARE FINISH | Chrome
BRIDGE | Standard four-Saddle
TUNING MACHINES | Enclosed Die-Cast Tuning
STRING NUT | Synthetic Bone

Gretsch is a name more strongly associated with those Bigsby-equipped hollowbody electric guitars beloved of country and roots guitarists than with the bass. However the Junior Jet offers good tones for a relatively meagre amount of money.

It's short scale, so works well for the smaller player, and also has that midrange focus and thumpy sound associated with shorter scale length basses. This is a bass that gives you some classic vintage tones from its pickups and should appeal to fans of 60s and 70s classic rock.

The Junior Jet's tone range is its strongest suit, in fact, and anyone interested in strutting their stuff in a roots band is strongly advised to give it a go. Perfect for Johnny Cash impressions.

CONTACT | www.gretsch.com

ESP LTD D-4

£479

MANUFACTURER | ESP
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | Indonesia
BODY | Merbau
NECK | 5 Piece Mahogany/Maple
NUT WIDTH | 40mm
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 24 J Frets
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAY MATERIAL | Abalone
TUNERS | Grover
BRIDGE | ESP BB-604 w/ String-thru-body
PICKUPS | ESP SB-4 (Bridge & Neck)
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS Bass (Cut/Boost), Mid (Cut/Boost), Treble (Cut/Boost), Master Volume, Balance
HARDWARE | Black Nickel
FINISH OPTIONS | Natural Satin

With its stylish looks the LTD D-4 is a pure rock machine, but it's got so much more going for it than mere lines. For under £500 you get neck-through body construction and a string-through bridge, all of which means you get incredible sustain from this bass.

The neck is slim, fast and ultra-playable, making it perfect for players who need to execute fleet-fingered runs to keep up with the guitarists.

The bass also has active electronics, which ensures that you can coax pretty much any sound you can imagine from the bass, and the balance control allows you to pan between the two humbuckers – meaning that sound shaping mid-gig has never been easier.

CONTACT | Selectron (UK) Ltd, 01795 419460
www.selectron-uk.co.uk , www.espguitars.co.uk

FENDER MODERN PLAYER JAGUAR

£454

MANUFACTURER | Fender
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | China
BODY | Koto
NECK | Maple, bolt-on
NUT WIDTH | 42mm
FRETBOARD | Maple
FRETS | 20 jumbo
SCALE LENGTH | 24"
TUNERS | Standard open gear
BRIDGE | Four-Saddle Vintage-Style with Brass Saddles
PICKUPS | Modern Player single coil Jazz bass (bridge), Modern Player split single-coil Precision bass (middle)
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Volume x2, Master Tone
HARDWARE | Nickel/Chrome
FINISH OPTIONS | Chocolate Burst, Red Transparent, Black Transparent

Leo Fender is where it all started, and naturally Fender basses have been top-sellers ever since their inception. If you want to grab yourself a slice of the action, but can't quite stretch to the American custom shop Precision of your dreams, then check out this stripped down and funky Jaguar bass in the Modern Player line, Fender's new entry level series that tweaks established designs to offer more to the, um, modern player. The quirky offset body shape may not be for everyone, but if you want something a bit different the Jaguar will certainly get you noticed. The P/J pickup configuration means you've got a huge tonal palette on offer here. The neck has a slender Jazz profile making it an easy play, and it has that familiar Fender quality across the whole bass.

CONTACT | www.fender.com

JACKSON JS3 CONCERT

£298

MANUFACTURER | Jackson
BODY | Indian cedro or basswood
NECK | Three-piece Maple
NUT WIDTH | 41.3mm
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 24
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
TUNERS | Jackson non-locking
BRIDGE | Jackson high-mass bridge
PICKUPS | Jackson humbuckers (neck and bridge)
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Three-band active tone circuit, Neck Volume, Bridge Volume, Bass, Mid, Treble
HARDWARE | Black
FINISH OPTIONS | Black, Quicksilver, Trasnparent Blue, Transparent Red

There was a time when Jackson basses, with their pointy headstocks and sharkfin inlays, were standard issue for rock and metal players. The JS3 is aimed at the bassist on a budget who wants grinding rock tones and much more. Thanks to the twin active humbuckers, and three-band EQ, the JS3 can be much more than just a rock machine, but it has an inherently gritty midrange bark that makes it suited to the heavier end of the musical spectrum more than anything else.

As you'd expect from a bass aimed at the metal market the bass is a quick and easy play, making maximum riffage an absolute pleasure. Not only that, the evil Jackson headstock is perfect for fending off stage invaders.

CONTACT | www.jacksonguitars.com

MUSIC MAN STERLING SUB RAY 4

£319.99

MANUFACTURER | Music Man
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | Indonesia
WEIGHT | 4.35kg
BODY | Basswood
NECK | Maple
NUT WIDTH | 38mm
FRETBOARD | Maple or rosewood
FRETS | 21
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
TUNERS | Enclosed
BRIDGE | Heavy duty chrome adjustable
PICKUPS | Humbucker
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Two-band active pre amp, volume
HARDWARE | Chrome
FINISH OPTIONS | Gloss or satin

A standard Stingray, built in California, will set you back a pretty penny indeed and most would agree it would be money well spent, but for those on a tighter budget the Sub Ray 4 lets you get a slice of that classic Stingray look and feel.

That iconic eight-pole humbucker delivers surprisingly meaty tones and the active two-band EQ lets you boost and cut your bass and treble to get the tone you need. A six-bolt neck join ensures maximum stability for the silky satin-finished neck.

OK, so it's not a classic Stingray, but for less than £320 this could be the best value bass out there.

We reviewed the Sub 4 in *BGM* last year and concluded that it was the best Stingray £300 could buy.

CONTACT | www.music-man.com

IBANEZ SR300-IPT

£300

MANUFACTURER | Ibanez
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | Indonesia
BODY | Agathis
NECK | Maple
NUT WIDTH | 38mm
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 24
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAY MATERIAL | Pearl dot
TUNERS | Sealed die cast
BRIDGE | Accu-cast B120
PICKUPS | CAP EXF N-2
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Master volume, pickup balance, bass, mid and treble boost/cut controls.
HARDWARE | Black

With a range of big name endorsees, the Soundgears have a name for versatility as well as affordability. The SR300 gives you an active bass at a wallet-friendly price.

What's most remarkable about this bass isn't the typical Ibanez build quality, or the subtle but attractive Iron Pewter finish, but the active electronics. With a three- band EQ you can coax a huge range of tones from the Ibanez EXF-4 pickups, and with a bit of judicious tweaking you can get deep, dubby reggae and percussive modern metal tones, all from one bass. The SR300 also features a Style Sweeper control, essentially a mid-range frequency control that adjusts the mids so you can get a workable finger/pick/slap tone from a single knob.

CONTACT | Headstock Distribution
www.headstockdistribution.com

EPIPHONE THUNDERBIRD IV

£219

MANUFACTURER | Epiphone
MODEL | Thunderbird-IV
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | Indonesia/China
WEIGHT | 4kg
BODY | Mahogany
NECK | Mahogany
NUT WIDTH | 38mm
FRETBOARD | Rosewood. 12" radius
FRETS | 20
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAY MATERIAL | Pearloid Dots
TUNERS | Premium Die Cast, Black Chrome, 17:1
BRIDGE | 3-Point
PICKUPS | Epiphone TB Plus HB
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Volume, Volume, Tone
HARDWARE | Black Chrome
FINISH OPTIONS | VS

In terms of sheer rock and roll coolness it's hard to beat the Thunderbird. Put to great use by players such as John Entwistle and Nikki Sixx, who had his own signature Thunderbird in black with Iron Cross inlays, it's a truly Marmite instrument.

Inherently neck-heavy due to its oversized headstock and neck/body proportions, this is a bass that is meant for live play, rather than seated practice sessions. Its twin TB Plus humbuckers give the Thunderbird a thick and satisfyingly grunty tone that's perfect for rock and metal, so grab a pick, sling it low and rock out. If it's good enough for stadium filling bands such as U2 and the Darkness, it's good enough for your set at the Dog and Duck.

CONTACT | www.epiphone.com

OVERWATER ASPIRATION
£385

MANUFACTURER | Tanglewood
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | China
WEIGHT | 3.5kg
BODY | White Ash
NECK | One piece Maple
NUT WIDTH | 40mm
BINDING | N/A
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 24
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAY MATERIAL | ABS White Dot
TUNERS | Gotoh style mini
BRIDGE | Overwater designed bridge
PICKUPS | Overwater Open pole J J, Passive
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Volume, Pan, Passive tone
HARDWARE | Chrome
FINISH OPTIONS | Gloss Black, Gloss Metallic Wine Red, Gloss Metallic Wine Red

Overwater basses ain't cheap, my friend. Built by British luthier Chris May, Overwater has become synonymous with quality hand-made instruments, but Chris had a long-held desire to offer 'off the peg' instruments that were affordable to a wide variety of players, but were worthy of the Overwater name. Teaming up with Tanglewood, Chris realised that ambition. The Overwater by Tanglewood range features a spread of models and the Aspiration Standard is their entry-level offering. A one-piece maple neck is married to a white ash body, while the passive single coil pickups mean you can get both vintage and modern tones from this sleek number.

CONTACT | www.tanglewoodguitars.co.uk
01937 841122

PEAVEY MILLENNIUM BXP 4
£249

MANUFACTURER | Peavey
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | Indonesia
WEIGHT | 4kg
BODY | Basswood w/quilted maple top
NECK | Maple
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 24
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
TUNERS | Black Peavey
BRIDGE | String through or top load
PICKUPS | 2 passive single coil
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Two volume control, one tone.
HARDWARE | Black

If there's one thing that Peavey knows how to do, it's how to make a super quality bass extremely affordable. The Millennium range always looks great and offers amazing value, coming in four- and five-string versions with active options too, but the entry-level BXP 4 offers staggering value.

A super-slim neck profile makes this a comfortable play, and great for aspiring rock and metal players. Twin Jazz pickups ensure that your basic tones are there, from plummy classic rock to grinding metal, and the range of colour options is attractive too. The BXP 4 is a superb choice for your first bass guitar.

CONTACT | www.peavey.com

SPECTOR PERFORMER 4
£349

MANUFACTURER | Spector
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | Indonesia
BODY | Basswood
NECK | Rock Maple
NUT WIDTH | 38mm
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 24 Jumbo
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAY MATERIAL | MOP
TUNERS | Spector
BRIDGE | Spector Performer
PICKUPS | Stuart Spector Design (SSD) Performer System – Passive/Dual Coil
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Passive. 2 x Tone / 2 x Vol
HARDWARE | Black Chrome Plated
FINISH OPTIONS | Black Gloss / Metallic Red Gloss

In the 80s you could barely move for the Spector basses adorning the rock stars of the day. Earning a reputation for great design and incredibly versatile tones, Spectors have found favour with musicians across the genre spectrum: you don't get two players more different in style than long-term Spector players Doug Wimbish and Rex Brown.

The Performer opens up Spector to the beginner. Made in Indonesia, the bass comes loaded with two passive Stuart Spector Designed pickups, which are made by EMG. They've been tweaked to give some extra mid-range bark, making the Performer great for rockers who need to cut through the mix.

CONTACT | www.spectorbass.com

SQUIER VINTAGE MODIFIED FRETLESS
£383

MANUFACTURER | Squier
BODY | Agathis
NECK | Maple
NUT WIDTH | 38mm
FRETBOARD | Ebonol
FRETS | 20, fretless
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
TUNERS | Standard open-gear tuners
BRIDGE | Standard four-saddle
PICKUPS | Duncan Designed JB101 Single-Coil Jazz Bass Bridge Pickup and Duncan Designed JB101 Single-Coil Jazz Bass Neck Pickup
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Volume 1. (Neck Pickup), Volume 2. (Bridge Pickup), Master Tone
HARDWARE | Chrome

There's something oh-so alluring about the expressive nature of the sounds available, and as Jaco and others have shown, it's not just about long glissandos and "mwah", the fretless can dish out attitude in spades too. However, many fretless basses are on the pricey side, and it's a whole new learning curve even for seasoned players, so making that first step can be daunting.

Squier's Vintage Modified Fretless opens up the fretless world to anyone. Coming in at an affordable price point, and with simply stunning quality for the money, if you've got the itch to try and be the next Pino Palladino then look no further.

CONTACT | www.fender.com/squier

STEINBERGER SPIRIT XT-2
£389

MANUFACTURER | Steinberger
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | Korea
WEIGHT | 3.5kg
BODY | Maple
NECK | Maple
NUT WIDTH | 38mm
FRETBOARD | Rosewood 14" Radius
FRETS | 24
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAY MATERIAL | Pearloid Dots
BRIDGE | Patented DoubleBall Bridge with 40:1 ratio direct pull tuners
PICKUPS | Steinberger Humbucker, Humbucker
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Volume, Volume, Tone
HARDWARE | Black Chrome
FINISH OPTIONS | Black

Despite being an unusual-looking instrument, the headless Steinberger basses have graced many a stadium stage over the years. Its snug body size and short overall length due to that missing headstock make this an ideal bass for travel purposes, but the XT-2 can hold its own among its lengthier brethren.

The tone range is wider than you might think for a bass that doesn't actually contain any wood.

It takes a while to get used to the shape and feel of the Steinberger when you're used to big slab-like basses, but it's a solid performer capable of handling a wide variety of musical genres.

CONTACT | www.steinberger.com

TANGLEWOOD REBEL 4
£199

MANUFACTURER | Tanglewood
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | China
WEIGHT | 3.5kg
BODY | Basswood
NECK | Maple
NUT WIDTH | 42mm
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 24
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAY MATERIAL | ABS Pearl Dot
TUNERS | Black die-cast
BRIDGE | Black die-cast
PICKUPS | Entwistle PBX and JBX
HARDWARE | Black die-cast
FINISH OPTIONS | Metallic Black, Metallic Red, Metallic Blue, Pearl White (Black model in LH also)

Tanglewood has been around for a long time, and must rank among one of the great success stories of the British guitar world. Their acoustic guitars have developed a formidable reputation, but their basses are often overlooked, which is a shame.

The Rebel is a no-frills workhorse that doesn't try and do anything flashy, but simply offers great value for money at less than £200. If you're taking your first steps into the world of bass, or are looking for a cheap backup or rehearsal bass, the Rebel could be your baby. We're big fans of the tasty finish options as well. The tone range is pretty decent too.

CONTACT | www.tanglewoodguitars.co.uk 01937 841122

VINTAGE V4
£339

MANUFACTURER | Vintage
BODY | Eastern Poplar
NECK | Hard Maple – Bolt On
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 20
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAYS | Dots (pearloid on rosewood boards, black on maple)
TUNERS | Wilkinson WJBL200
BRIDGE | Adjustable
PICKUPS | Wilkinson PB x 1 (M) WPB
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS: 1 x Volume, 1 x Tone
HARDWARE | Chrome
FINISH OPTIONS | Right-handed: Sunburst, Boulevard Black, Vintage White (w/rosewood or maple board) – Lefty in Boulevard Black only

Made of eastern poplar, these basses are light and comfortable. The Trevor Wilkinson-designed hardware is tough yet light, adding to the comfort factor of these basses. The Precision-style pickup, also designed by Wilkinson, gives a bit more edge to the traditional Precision bass tones you'd expect. The build quality is superb throughout on these basses, matching instruments twice the price or more, and the line also features the Tony Butler signature model. Available in a variety of colour options, with maple and rosewood fretboard choices, and even a lefty model, the V4 is one of the best budget basses on the market today.

CONTACT | www.jhs.co.uk/vintagebass.html

VINTAGE EST96 ACTIVE
£259

MANUFACTURER | Vintage
BODY | Eastern Poplar
NECK | Maple – Bolt On
BINDING | N/A
FRETBOARD | Maple
FRETS | 21
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAYS | Black Dot
TUNERS | Wilkinson WJBL200
BRIDGE | Adjustable
PICKUPS | Wilkinson Humbucker x 1 (B) and WSM5 – 5 string
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | 3-Band Active EQ Bass 12dB ± 5kHz / Middle 12dB ± 2kHz / Treble 12dB ± 100Hz 1 x Volume
HARDWARE | Chrome
FINISH OPTIONS | 4-string: Sunburst right and left-handed), Black and Natural (righty only). 5-string: Flame Top Brownburst (righty only)

Unless you can afford the £1000-plus asking price Music Man Stingrays remain out of reach for many, especially the beginning player. If you want to cop some of the look and feel of a Stingray but on a budget, then check out the Vintage EST96. Available as a four- and a five-string, both well under the £400 mark, the EST96 has a maple neck and fretboard for a zingy, punchy tone. The Wilkinson hardware and pickup are great quality, and the three-band active EQ gives you great control over your tone. Sure, it's not a Stingray, but for a bit over £300 you get a great quality active bass that gives you the look of Leo Fender's third most famous bass design.

CONTACT | www.jhs.co.uk/vintagebass.html

BASSES ON A BUDGET

WARWICK ROCKBASS STREAMER STANDARD 4

£389

MANUFACTURER | Warwick
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | China
WEIGHT | 3.8kg
BODY | Carolena
NECK | Maple neck with Rosewood fingerboard available also as fretless with Tigerstripe Ebony
NUT WIDTH | 38.5mm
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 24
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAY MATERIAL | no Inlays
TUNERS | Warwick Tuners
BRIDGE | Warwick two-piece bridge
PICKUPS | 2 passive MEC Vintage Humbuckers
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | passive electronics
HARDWARE | Chrome hardware
FINISH OPTIONS | Available Finishes: Natural satin, oil finish burgundy red, ocean blue, Nirvana black, Honey violin and black high polish

If there's one thing the Germans do incredibly well, it's design and engineering. Warwick has built an enviable reputation as one of the best bass builders in the world, but as with most things, you have to pay a premium for that quality. Recognising that their instruments needed to be within reach of the aspiring player, Warwick launched their RockBass line. Retailing at under £400, the RockBass Streamer Standard is built in China, but to Warwick's exacting specifications, and features Warwick hardware, as well as two passive humbuckers for meaty rock sounds and tonal variety. The Streamer comes in a variety of finishes and is also available as a fretless.

CONTACT | www.warwickbass.com

YAMAHA BB424

£469/566

MANUFACTURER | Yamaha
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | Indonesia
WEIGHT | 6kg
BODY | Solid Alder
NECK | Maple/Rosewood ply
FRETS | 21
SCALE LENGTH | 35"
PICKUPS | P/J Combination SC
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | Vol, tone, toggle switch
HARDWARE | Yamaha chrome
FINISH OPTIONS | Black, tobacco, brown sunburst, vintage white, red metallic

The venerable BB series of basses by Yamaha has been a firm favourite of big name players over the years, played by the likes of Nathan East, Michael Anthony and Lee Sklar to name a few. Thanks to Yamaha's stringent quality standards the affordable BB424 can proudly take its place in the family.

The five-piece maple and nato neck is designed to improve strength and reduce warping. With a neck profile somewhere between a Jazz and a Precision, the BB424 should feel comfortable for most players, while the punchy pickups ensure you can get anything from smooth jazz to out-and-out rock from this beauty.

CONTACT | uk.yamaha.com

WASHBURN AB10

£400

MANUFACTURER | Washburn
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN | China
WEIGHT | 2.8kg
BODY | Top: Arched Spruce. Sides/Back – Arched Maple
NECK | Mahogany
NUT WIDTH | 40mm
FRETBOARD | rosewood
FRETS | 21
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
INLAY | dot
TUNERS | Grover exclusive
BRIDGE | rosewood/piezo
PICKUPS | custom piezo
ELECTRONICS/CONTROLS | volume, presence, treble, middle, bass
HARDWARE | chrome

With its sleek profile and Les Paul-style body the AB10 offers something a bit different to the standard acoustic bass guitar. It's the kind of instrument that would have shown up on *MTV Unplugged* back in the day when Bon Jovi and the like were rocking the house. Its proportions make it a comfortable and easy play, and the unplugged sound is surprisingly clear and resonant. That giant body won't be for everyone, but if it's plangent acoustic tones you're looking for, you can't possibly go wrong. At £400, we've yet to find an acoustic bass that is as playable or as good looking as this.

CONTACT | Sound Technology Tel: 01462 480 000

YULE LOVE THEM

A list of bass retailers we know and trust. There are many other splendid retail sources out there too, so do look around, but if it's friendly advice about basses (budget or otherwise), plus a cup of tea and maybe even a glass of mulled wine (hey, it never hurts to ask) you could do worse than starting your search for that stocking-filling bass right here.

BASS DIRECT

www.bassdirect.co.uk
Unit 12, Rigby Close
Heathcote Ind Est
Warwick, CV34 6TH
01926 886433

BASS GEAR

www.bassgear.co.uk
Unit 2
Twyford Business Park
Gas Lane,
Twyford,
Reading,
Berkshire, RG10 9TU
01189 706925

MANSONS GUITAR SHOP

www.mansons.co.uk
McCoys Arcade
Fore Street
Exeter, EX4 3AN
01392 496379

MANCHESTER BASS LOUNGE

www.manchesterbasslounge.com
Greenleach Lane
Worsley
Manchester
07837 011 889

COMPETITION!

If you're on the hunt for a budget bass, we want to hear from you. Drop the editor a line (joel@blazepublishing.co.uk) with details of your new sub-£500 acquisition and we'll send you something special for your gig bag.

Allianz Musical Insurance is a trading name of British Reserve Insurance Company Limited (BRIC), a wholly owned subsidiary of Allianz Insurance plc. BRIC is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Registered office: 57 Ladymead, Guildford, Surrey GU1 1DB. Registered in England No. 307622.

© 2013 JHS & Co. Ltd.
Vintage®
VJ74 Icon
VJ74 ReIssued
Now with maple fingerboards
Classic Vintage feel. Authentic tone.
"My Vintage is a great sounding, well built bass that has a playability well beyond any other in its price range."
Dishan Abrahams Session Bassist
(Kylie Minogue/Sugababes/Christophe Willem)
Visit your local dealer and try one out today!
www.jhs.co.uk
EXCLUSIVE WORLDWIDE TRADE DISTRIBUTORS: JOHN HORNBY SKEWES & CO. LTD.
facebook.com/vintageinstruments
twitter.com/gearmagazine

FEARFUL BASS CAB PARTS
Lean-Business.co.uk
Huge stocks of Celestion, Eminence, Tayden, WGS, 18 Sound, Ciare
Now stocking Montage PRO and INTRO 'empty' guitar cabinets..
15" Bass Cabinet Upgrade!
Change your15" speaker and maximise your cabinet
18 Sound 15ND830
450 Watts 4 0r 8 ohm
38-5000 Htz 4.1kg
NEO £178
FaitalPRO 15PR400
400 Watts 4 0r 8 ohm
35-4000 Htz 3.6kg
NEO £149
CIARE 15-2.1
400 Watts Co axial
35-16000hz!!!!
NEO £399
WGS
WAREHOUSE GUITAR SPEAKERS
G12C £64.95
G12CS £64.95
ET65 £64.95
LIBERATOR £69.95
Green Beret £62.95
INVADER £69.95
TAYDEN
Handmade in the UK
ACE 25 ALNICO £173.57
NEW VINTAGE £183.73
FREE DELIVERY on CELESTION & EMINENCE
CELESTION Free Delivery
EMINENCE Free Delivery
BL10 200X..........£55
BN10 200X NEO.£95
BN12 300S NEO £111
BN12 300X NEO £111
BL15 300X...........£79
BL15 400X.........£103
TF1525..................£75
Vintage 30.........£79
Gold...................£215
G12M Heritage.£127
G12H Heritage.£138
Creamback.........£79
Greenback.........£79
Classic Lead......£79
G12K 100............£79
Basslite 2010.....£79.34
BP102.................£56.59
B810...................£48.96
Basslite 2012.....£83.92
Kappalite 3012LF..£171
CA154..................£67.48
Kappalite 3015LF..£189
Legend CB15........£103
APT 80 HF..........£21.31
Cannabis Rex..£61.04
Reignmaker...£131.58
Swamp Thang.£70.57
Texas Heat......£59.71
Governor.........£70.57
Wizard.............£70.57
Red Thang....£173.53
Legend 1218...£51.50
Copperhead....£54.67
Montage Pro 15" Bass Cabinets
Baltic Birch Ply Superb quality
Compact lightweight design
Durable professional finish
Available empty or loaded
Wide choice of speaker options
59x50x40cm!!!
www.lean-business.co.uk
sales@lean-business.co.uk
01473 744089
Montage 'EMPTY' Guitar Cabinets
18mm Birch Ply
Superb quality
Montage INTRO 4 x12" £149.95
NEW
Montage INTRO 1x15" £139.95
NEW
Montage INTRO 2 x10" £109.95
Montage INTRO 2 x12" £129.95
Montage INTRO 1 x12" £99.95
Custom full colour printed grilles available for Montage cabinets.

LIKE A ROLLING STONE

Darryl Jones has played more stadia than you've snapped strings. What advice has he got for bass players? Andy Hughes gets offa his cloud and asks the questions

In a list of bass players who snag the prestigious gigs, the real once-in-a-lifetime line-ups, Darryl Jones has been blessed at least twice in his career. First, he recorded with jazz giant Miles Davis, and now he is bassist-of-choice for eternal rockers the Rolling Stones. So let's talk with Jones about those two iconic positions, and some of the other premier slots he has secured over the years, starting with Miles.

Jones settles down on his living room couch, and recalls his time with the jazz legend. "Miles had an interesting approach to music," he recalls. "If he found that you had a set of moves, or notes or styles that worked with the music, he would take those away from you. He would suddenly say that he didn't want to hear those sounds any more, and more or less force you back to the drawing board. There was nothing subtle about it: he would just say, don't play that any more, because he wanted the music to change and evolve. He wanted things to breathe, and not get too static. I guess that promotes a sense of creativity, and looking at things from a different point of view from time to time. I think that has become a part of the way I look at music now."

He continues: "I grew up playing all different kinds of music. One of the reasons why I wanted to be a musician when I was younger was that I wouldn't have to do the same thing every day. As much as I love playing rock and roll, I don't want to do it for the rest of my life, any more than I would want to play jazz all the time. I think fresh input into my playing is essential to keep me interested."

And the Rolling Stones? "With the Stones, I felt that it was very important for me not to change the feel of the way the songs were played when they were recorded. But by the same token, I didn't want to play exactly the way Bill [Wyman, Jones's predecessor] plays because our techniques are different, our approaches to playing are different, our influences are different, and we have a difference in age between us. I don't know a whole lot about Bill's musical development, but I do know that he has a deep and abiding respect for blues music, as do I. But I would have to say that because of my age, I am somewhat more influenced by soul music, because that was more what I listened to when I was growing up. My dad listened to a Chicago jazz radio station, and the stations I picked up were playing more James Brown than Howlin' Wolf, more Beatles than Muddy Waters, more Sam & Dave than Robert Johnson."

Jones goes on: "I think sometimes the Stones songs require more of a jazz groove, and that maybe grooving is like swinging for those songs. I was told by Jeff Watts, one of the leading jazz drummers, that even if you are playing a funk groove, there should be the slightest element of a shuffle in there. A shuffle is a derivation of a jazz swing, so to me, those feelings are related very closely. Music should be endowed with a feeling of rocking back and forth, in all sorts of ways and styles. It is more instinctive – you don't need to think about it."

Like most players at the top of their game, Jones has a signature bass, but he's keen to ensure that learners and gigging musicians can afford some of the magic he enjoys. Jones explains his thinking, saying: "My current bass is made by a company called Lakland who are out of Chicago, and it was built with me by a luthier named Albey Balgochian. Albey has built two basses for me: one is a fretless with a transducer pickup in the bridge, there are no magnetic pickups anywhere on the instrument. The neck is made from violin-quality wood. All the woods he uses are very old. He built me an acoustic bass first, and then an electric stand-up bass. We became friends, and we were discussing how a lot of good basses, such as pre-CBS P-Basses which we both love, are really very expensive these days, and how it would be good to make a production model that was inexpensive and got close to those basses in terms of the weight of sound you can get."

He adds: "So we designed a bass and marketed it under his company name, but we realised that we didn't have the budget to advertise it properly, which is what you need, so we decided to find a company to license it. We discussed the idea with a few companies, and we worked out a deal with Lakland. The company ran into some financial trouble a few years ago, and we withdrew our bass and started looking elsewhere for a licensing deal. We didn't find one before Lakland managed to get themselves turned around again, so we re-licensed with them, and they manufacture the Darryl Jones Signature bass once again. The thinking behind it for Albey and I was that the basses we love are outside the budget of a lot of young musicians, so what about if we make one that they can work at McDonald's for the summer, and then be able to afford one of our basses. I know that there are basses out there for a couple of hundred dollars, and I do wonder if you could get a good long-lasting bass for that sort of money. But if you spend around a thousand dollars you can get one of ours, which has a good sound and a good build quality.

Jones gives his explanation for his current basses of choice. "It's interesting, because I always used to use a Jazz or a P-Bass until after I had been playing with the Stones for a while, and it occurred to me that the sound and the tone I was getting from my basses didn't really suit their songs. So I started using a Gretsch Electrotone, which has a chambered body, that I play with half-wound strings. As the name suggests, they're somewhere between flatwound and roundwound, and they gave me an interesting tone to work with. I use the Mustang bass when we play 'Satisfaction', which has a unique sound of its own. I think it may be down to the string tension. I also play a Fritz Brothers copy of an old Kay bass, which has a really big neck and a pickup that's near the end of the fretboard, and a chambered body. I use that for reggae and for any early-60s tunes that need a bit of bite on the beginning of the notes. For the last 15 years, and particularly since playing with the Stones, I have been conscious of finding the model of bass that fits the individual song. I do use my Signature model a lot because it has a Jazz design, and I think that fits into more than one style quite easily."

Bass players who have the money – and plenty who don't – love to collect bass guitars, and Jones is no exception, although he has taken the collecting aspect of his life one stage further, as he outlines. "I do like some older basses, especially the 1966 Jazz basses with the binding and blocks," he says. "I love the old P-basses from the mid-60s too. I grew up playing a Fender Mustang and I still have one – and I'm about to acquire another one, which is exactly the same colour as the one I played when I was a kid. They're short-scale instruments and they have a very particular sound which I don't think a lot of people are aware of."

Jones then tells us about his own attempts at the luthier's craft. "I attended a course at the Musicians' Institute for guitar building, which I wasn't able to finish because of commitments, but I did manage to build one bass, which is my own version of the P-Bass with one pickup. I think I must have had a degree of beginner's luck with it, because it sounds really good. It is a little heavier than I planned, but the sound is excellent. I had a couple of bass player friends who I trust to try it out and give me an honest opinion, and they agreed that it sounded and played really well. I've thought about taking it out on the road, but I don't want to risk not being able to carry it on the plane, and then have it destroyed by baggage handlers. I think I may have the body copied, and keep the original at home, and maybe take a copy on tour with me. Working on a guitar from start to finish is one of the most fun things I have ever done – you get lost for hours trying to get the shape just right, and getting the radius of the neck right. I'd like to be in a situation where I always have something up on the bench that I am working on, and maybe one day it's something I will be able to do professionally." ■

"WITH THE STONES, I FELT THAT IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR ME NOT TO CHANGE THE FEEL OF THE WAY THE SONGS WERE PLAYED WHEN THEY WERE RECORDED"

Bass Guitar Magazine

DIGITAL EDITIONS
AVAILABLE ON iPAD, iPHONE AND ANDROID
VISIT
pocketmags.com
Available on the iPhone App Store

CALLING ALL CAMPERS...

Every year bass manufacturers Warwick hold a star-studded Bass Camp at their HQ in rural Germany. We sent Bob Battersby along to say, 'So, do you come here often, Victor?'

A man walks in to a bar and sees Stu Hamm, John Patitucci, Lee Sklar and Jonas Hellborg having a drink together... but hang on a moment, there's Dick Lovgren and Andy Irvine by the bar, and isn't that Steve Bailey over there with Victor Wooten?

Bass heaven? No, this is the Hotel Alpenhof in Markneukirchen, Germany, and this is Bass Camp, Warwick's latest initiative to connect directly with the bass playing community. Right at this moment, this is the social side of the Bass Camp, where the students, Warwick staff and bass 'Professors' eat, drink, hang out and jam after an intensive day in the classroom. No 'them and us', no VIP area with velvet ropes, just great bass players hanging out and jamming with the students. The vibe of the evening sessions was summed up by the look on a Dutch student in the beginner's class, as she jammed with Victor Wooten – a mixture of surprise mixed with sheer pleasure.

Every morning, buses transported students to Warwick HQ at 8.15am. This is Germany, after all, and lessons started at 9am sharp. Students were split into five groups, with three Intermediate classes, topped and tailed by Beginners and Professionals. The 17 Professors (among whom Swedish metal guru Dick Lovgren and Victor Brandt were a double act) did a session with each group – so, with 16 classes over the four days, everyone got touched by greatness.

Six hours a day of intensive tuition ranged from hands-on technical exercises to virtuoso demonstrations and tales of life as a working musician. Veteran bassist John B Williams – who has backed just about everyone on Johnny Carson's *Tonight* show – made the point that there is no good and bad in music, just on and off. Just because you don't like it doesn't mean that it's bad, so open your ears.

Speaking to the beginners group. he stressed the importance of playing through mistakes, telling us: "Don't stop, just keep grooving, even when you lose your place."

Stu Hamm, the king of tap and slap, gave each group a masterclass in solo playing, but also stressed the need for solid technique. Equally important is the need to have an effective warm-up routine, with hand stretches and exercises to prevent the back and neck problems that plague bass players. It's worth checking out his website for more on this.

Reggie Wooten discussed melody, rhythm and harmony, while brother Victor looked at the 10 constituents that form the primary function of bass in music: notes, tone, phrasing, rhythm, technique, articulation, feel, dynamics, listening and space. That was one tough hour and a half! Meanwhile, Ove Bosch, with years of studio and pit work behind him, went back to basics like thumb muting, while Antonella Mazza concentrated on hand positions for electric and upright bass. Helmut Hatter, Krautrock legend, concentrated on pick technique, winning over a

La Bella®

Superior Quality

A STRING FOR EVERY STYLE!

La Bella makes the right set for your Bass string needs.

BASS GUITAR

- **Nickel Plated Round Wound**
- **Stainless Steel Round Wound**
- **Deep Talkin' Bass Series** (Available in Round, Flat, Quarter, and Black Nylon Tape Wound)
- **Double Ball System for Steinbergers** (Available in Flat, Round, and Black Nylon Tape Wound)
- **Super Steps** (Exposed Core)

DOUBLE BASS

- **Black Nylon Tape Wound** (Rope Core)
- **SuperNil** (Nylon Wound)
- Also Available in Metal, Gut, Gut & Wound on Gut, Chrome Steel Flat Wound and more!

ALL SETS AVAILABLE IN *ALL* SCALES.

CUSTOM VINTAGE SETS: Hofner Beatle Bass, Fender Bass VI, Mustang, Danelectro, Ampeg, Ampeg Baby Baby Bass, Japan Short Scale Kanda Shokai from the 1960's, Kay, Framus, Hagstrom, Kapa, Estey, Silver Tone, Harmony, Valco, Vox-Wiman, Six String Gibson.

AVAILABLE AT YOUR FAVORITE MUSIC SHOP.

EXCLUSIVE DISTRIBUTION IN U.K.: Summerfield Musical Instruments

www.sf-music.co.uk • mail@sf-music.co.uk • (0191) 414 9000

A Fusion of Artistry and Technology

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF A FAMILY TRADITION DATING BACK TO 1640.

WOUND WITH AMERICAN WIRE. MADE IN THE USA.

CHECK OUT OUR FULL LINE OF BASS STRINGS AT

WWW.LABELLA.COM

TRADEMARKED LA BELLA STRINGS. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

few converts from finger style, while Andy Irvine stressed the importance of rhythm and tone.

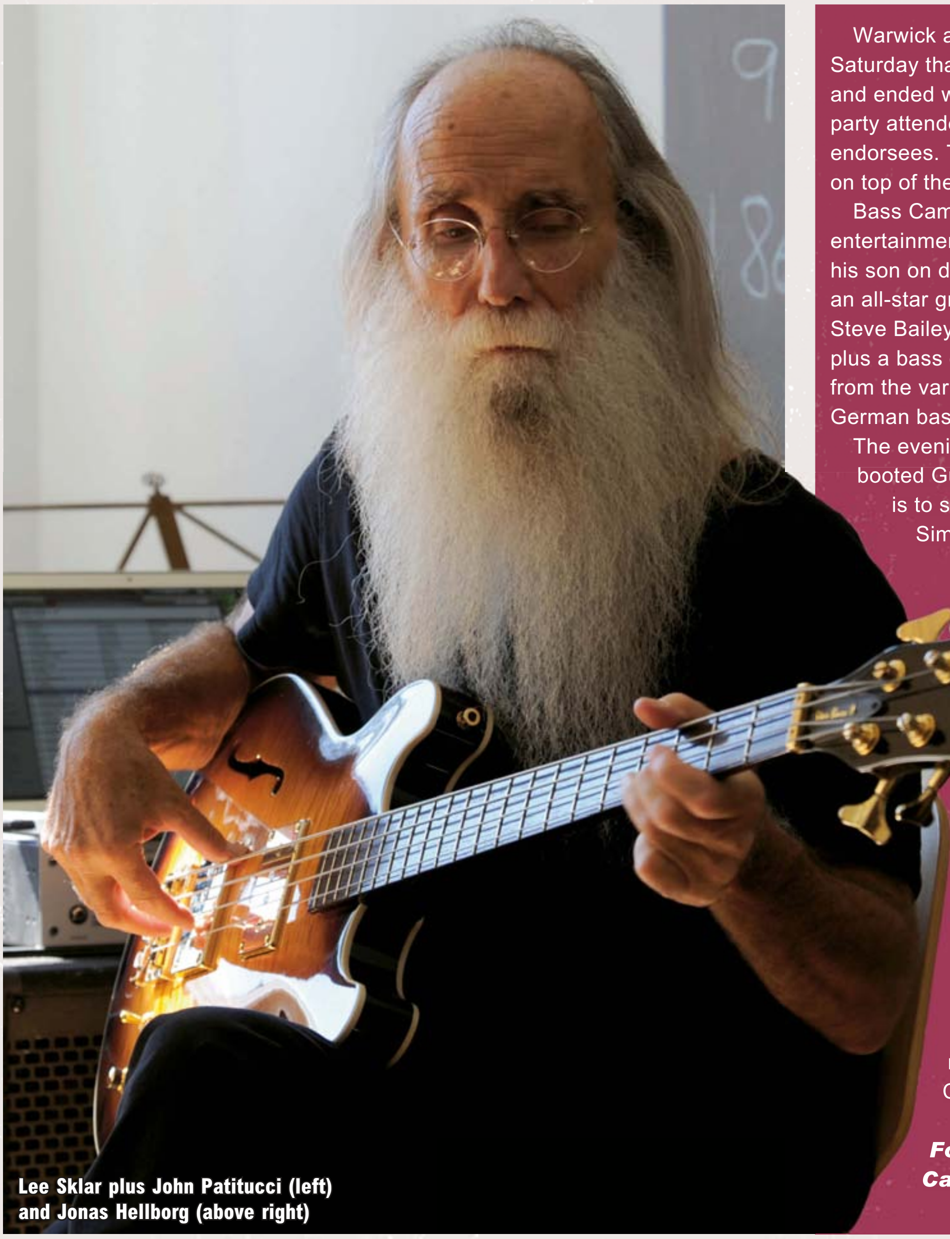
Another Dutch student told me how she went into Lovgren and Brandt's session with trepidation, not being a metal fan, only for Dick to kick off by saying that when not in metal giants Meshuggah he's studying jazz composition at the Gothenburg Music University with Anders Jormin. There is no good or bad music, remember.

For me, the highlight of the week was meeting Lee Sklar. For those of us of a certain age, his bass playing featured on just about every seminal record we heard during our adolescence. If you check out his discography, you'll wear out your other thumb scrolling through Wikipedia. Sklar's tutorial combined useful information on how to be a successful session player, with examples of his work. He made the point that you never know what to expect when you walk into a studio and that the critical relationship that you have to form is with the drummer. He also described how much of his work was done with his 'Frankenstein' bass, a Carvin P body with a '62 Fender Precision neck, re-fretted with narrow mandolin fret wire. Combined with a high action, this gave him a clean sound and enabled a smooth playing style. He's certainly no fan of over-fussy bass playing with too much overdubbing and layers, likening this to an English lasagne – "Looks great, but no flavour!"

On the last morning of the Camp, we sat on the balcony of Warwick's futuristic office building while Hans-Peter Wilfer, founder of Warwick, outlined his vision for the event. "Bass Camp is pure education and a lifetime experience," he said, going on to explain that, although the Camp is created by Warwick, there is no hard sell behind it, with the emphasis being on education and the exchange of ideas.

"DON'T STOP, JUST KEEP GROOVING, EVEN WHEN YOU LOSE YOUR PLACE"

This, the second Bass Camp, had attracted 84 students from 13 countries as far away as Australia and Costa Rica. The price of 699 euros is deliberately affordable, allowing the broadest range of students to attend, with the balance of the cost coming from Warwick's marketing budget. "You have to create desire," Hans-Peter said, and Bass Camp, while giving students a unique opportunity to interact with some of the world's greatest players, also lets them get up close and personal with some of Warwick's finest basses.



Lee Sklar plus John Patitucci (left) and Jonas Hellborg (above right)

Warwick also held an open day on the Saturday that attracted more than 2000 visitors and ended with a Bass Camp 'end of term' party attended by the students, tutors and many endorsees. This was staged in the hall that sits on top of the distribution warehouse.

Bass Camp came into its own with entertainment from the Wootens (Victor on bass, his son on drums and brother Reggie on guitar), an all-star group featuring Sklar, Jonas Hellborg, Steve Bailey and Chester Thompson on drums, plus a bass orchestra made up of students from the various Bass Camp classes and led by German bass maestro, Wolfgang Schmid.

The evening was kicked off by a suited and booted Guy Pratt describing how difficult it is to smash a bass on stage, *à la* Paul Simonon, when the road crew hand you a graphite (and therefore) indestructible bass. This demonstration was performed with a Status 'air bass' as Warwick seemed reluctant to hand him a real one...

By the way, did I mention diet tips from Jonas Hellborg over dinner, or TM Stevens practising his Japanese on an unsuspecting student over breakfast, or Guy Pratt almost making me crash the car as he told a story so completely unfit for a family magazine that the editor would have to kill me if I repeated it? What happens at Bass Camp, stays at Bass Camp. ■

For info on the annual Bass Camp, visit www.warwick.de.

Redefining a Classic
CARVIN
The new PB4 and PB5 basses feature classic looks combined with improved playbility and tone. Carvin's new SCP split-coil humbucker with its large Alnico V magnets and vintage plain enamel wire sounds so huge, that players immediately think they're playing an active bass. Order your PB from your nearest Carvin dealer and choose from our vast selection of options.
Features:
• Alder body and tung-oiled maple neck Optional Swamp Ash body and figured tops
• 34"-scale 14"-radius rosewood fingerboard Optional Ebony, Maple and Bird's Eye fingerboards
• PB4 4-string: 20 medium-jumbo frets
• PB5 5-string: 22 medium-jumbo frets
• SCP split-coil humbucker with vintage enamel wire and Alnico V magnets delivers a punchy low end
• Optional PJ with JVA jazz type bridge pickup with a well rounded bottom end, full punchy mids & crisp highs
• Passive or 18v Active Electronics
MADE IN U.S.A.
CARVIN
carvinworld.com
UK dealers
Bass Gear Ltd
44 01189 706925
bassgear.co.uk
Rock Star Guitar
0121 439 9662
rockstarguitar.co.uk
Sound Unlimited
0208 123 2477
soundunlimited.co.uk
Knighton Music
01547 528529
knightonmusiccentre.com
Mid Air Music
01634 846 886
midairmusic.com

RICHMOND DAYS

Christopher Budd meets veteran session bassist Dave Richmond for a look back at his career

Session supremo Dave Richmond's CV reads like the proverbial who's who of British music in the 60s and 70s, featuring Manfred Mann, the John Barry Seven, Dusty Springfield, Cliff Richard, the Shadows and Elton John. His playing on Serge Gainsbourg's classic *Histoire De Melody Nelson* influenced a generation, while his work for library music label KPM has been compiled and collected by crate-diggers and samplers alike.

As with many musicians of his generation, it was a stint in the armed forces that jump-started Dave's musical career. Initially training on clarinet, upon arriving at RAF Butzweilerhof in Cologne he found an old double bass in the corner of the band room and never looked back. The daily training he received in sight-reading served him well in his later career as a session player. "When you're learning to read, it does help to read in community, in a band situation," he says. "It's miserable sitting at home, isn't it, trying to learn?"

After his demob, a half-world tour on the liner SS Oriana followed, and then a period at Butlins Pwllheli, playing in two big bands. His work there with the band under Eric Galloway led him to sessions in London with bandleader Ted Taylor (who was also an A&R man for CBS Records), who in turn recommended him to top fixer Charlie Katz. "I think that's the secret really, you build up lots of contacts. I never had an agent or anything like that."

Quite understandably, Dave has played on more sessions than he can remember. "It was endless – three a day very often," he says. "Sometimes four! Sometimes you'd do a jingle at eight o'clock in the morning on the way into town. You never did less than four tracks on most sessions, sometimes six in a three-hour session. It was just insane the amount of work we were doing. You might have recorded 18 things in a day, potentially".

Part of Dave's distinctive sound is down to his use of the Burns Bison bass, which he still has – in fact it's almost impossible to find a picture of him from the 60s or 70s without it. Was it his only electric bass? "For years!" he laughs. "It's ridiculous, really. I didn't even have a spare bass!"

The particular design of the Burns allowed Dave to get the 'click bass' sound so prominent on his recordings for Gainsbourg. "You've got to use a plectrum," he says. "You have to dampen the sound, but you have to have a fundamental note going. Some of the guys achieved it by putting foam under the strings, but that used to deaden the sound completely, I never did it that way. The Burns was particularly good for it, because the setting of the neck was different to a Fender so it was quite convenient to put your palm just on the bridge to dampen the strings. But you could just adjust it so you could get the click and let the note ring on as well if you wanted."

Dave is still gigging with several jazz bands, but over the course of his career he's seen a lot of traditional sources of work dry up: "I very rarely do any sessions now. In our day a lot of our work was doing demos. I think they reckoned about 83 new songs coming every week. Most of them bombed, but you might get the odd one that became a hit. And we'd be on all these sessions that never got anywhere at all".

Now also spending part of his time teaching, Dave is enthusiastic about what he sees. "The colleges now are turning out fantastic young musicians. I couldn't do anything like they do," he says. With all these musicians about, and sessions so thin on the ground, what advice can Dave share for those who might like to follow him into session work? "You've just got to take any opportunity. If you want to learn to read, try and get in a rehearsal band. Even if you don't like the music particularly, it will get you reading. Particularly sit next to the piano player. I learned a lot from piano players!" ■

BAXTER ON BASS

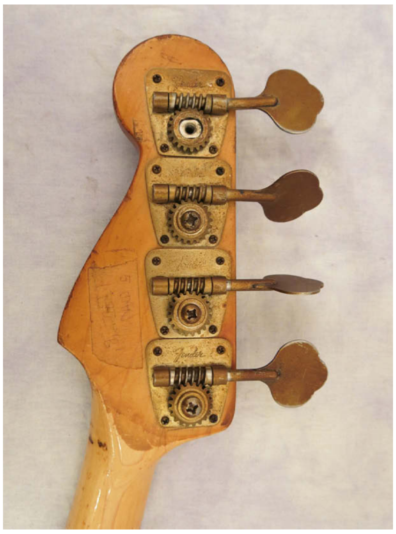
NORMAN WATT-ROY

In the second instalment of his series on legendary bass guitars, Andy Baxter meets Blockhead Norman Watt-Roy for a chat about his famous Rhythm Stick…

It's a sunny day in Shoreditch and I'm waiting in my showroom for the imminent arrival of Sir Norman Watt-Roy. I've been lucky enough to become friends with Norman over the years, so I'm looking forward to having a catch-up over a coffee. The doorbell goes, and Norman is standing outside with a rather special bass guitar slung over his shoulder in a gig bag. The bass in question is commonly known as the Rhythm Stick, but to Norman it's also referred to as Patty, after his late wife.

The Rhythm Stick is a 1972 Fender Precision bass in sunburst, with a maple fingerboard and serial number 346557. This bass has some serious history, which can be seen in how beat up it is. The finish, both on the body and headstock, shows all the signs of many years in bars and clubs. Furthermore, there's lots of play-wear and even chunks missing, most notably in a large area just above the back pickup, where Norman has worn right through the finish and a few millimetres of the wood with his thumb. It's been modified by adding a Jazz pickup at the bridge and an extra control pot and knob. The pick guard and covers are long gone, according to Norman. The frets are in remarkable shape for such a heavily played bass, and he swears that it has never had a refret. The three-tone sunburst is more like a tobacco burst, which has been helped along by Norman's smoking habit. I know that Chris Ward, my tech, has given this bass plenty of TLC over the years. Despite all this, the Rhythm Stick remains a fine bass to play.

How about its history? Well, in 1972 Norman bought this instrument from a shop in Fulham called TW Music. At the time he was living with Onnie McIntyre from the Average White Band, who came running home one day telling Norman that he had to come and check a bass out. At first sight Norman



wasn't too impressed, as he was really looking for a Jazz, but after having tried it out he fell in love with it, mainly because the neck was so slim, rather like a Jazz bass. Its price of £160 – over £1,500 at today's prices – meant that Norman was short by £110, so he put down the £50 he had saved and promised that he'd be back with the rest. The next day, he was the proud owner of a brand new 1972 Fender Precision. Patty, Norman's soon-to-be wife, helped him out with the rest of the cash, which is why this bass means so much to him.

The bass went on the road with Norman for the rest of the 70s. Ian Dury & The Blockheads' *New Boots And Panties!!* album was recorded on this bass, along with the album's most famous tune, 'Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick'. At the time, the bass had only its original Precision pickup – the Jazz pickup at the back was added later.

This article is supposed to focus on the bass, but I have to tell you this story. The Blockheads' first USA tour was in support of the great, and sadly late, Lou Reed. Norman told me that the band found it a little disheartening that Lou paid little or no attention to the young lads from London. One night at a gig on the West Coast, Rod Stewart and Ron Wood turned up to give the Blockheads some support, and Norman and the rest of the Blockheads let their feelings be known about Lou Reed's rudeness in a conversation backstage. Rod and Ron's reply was along the lines of "We'll sort him out!" – a comment that went largely unnoticed until later that evening. As the lights went up and Lou Reed walked on stage with his guitar, it seemed like any other night on tour – but not so: when Lou struck the first chord, he was way out of tune. His guitar tech ran on with another guitar, but that too sounded more like a goose farting in the fog (to quote Billy Connolly) than a stringed instrument. Lou glared at his tech, who nervously handed him yet another guitar – but that too was miles out. He then stormed off stage and blamed the Blockheads for the tuning problems. Of course, it had been the terrible twosome Rod and Ronnie who had detuned his guitars, just minutes before the lights went up. While telling me this story, Norman nearly spilled his coffee over a 60s Ampeg, so I'd better get back to the plot...

Norman has never retired his Precision as such: he has simply moved on to other things. For a short while in the early 80s he used an Alembic, kindly given to him by John Entwistle who had (according to Norman) bought "12 of the damn things". However, Norman found it too delicate a bass for his taste, and in the mid-80s he bought the 62 Jazz in Shoreline gold that I recently sold for him to Colin Greenwood from Radiohead. That Jazz was faithfully built and reproduced in Britain for Norman and named 'The Blockhead' by Barry at the Bass Centre, with input from Chris Ward and Martin Sims. Norman has been using the Blockhead bass on tour for a few years now. More recently, my good friend Joseph Kaye made him a Jazz bass – this time not a reproduction of the original but a Jazz with a twist, called 'Faith And Grace'.

The day after this interview took place, Norman went to see Barry from the Bass Centre, who has recently produced a Korean-made Rhythm Stick as part of the British Bass Masters and Bass Collection series. This new Rhythm Stick has been inspired by the original and is now on sale for £695. Take a look at my website for details.

I hope you've enjoyed my second article on classic bass guitars. Until the next time, enjoy your playing and keep on grooving! ■

Visit www.andybaxterbass.com for more information on iconic basses.

Johan L., quality check guitar

www.thomann.de
thomann
MUSIC IS OUR PASSION

18+

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME -

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
Cheap constant access to piping hot media
Protect your downloadings from Big brother
Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages
Brand new content
One site

AVXLIVE.ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open https://avxlive.icu

STUDIO TALK

Continuing our behind-the-scenes series of studio reports, *BGM* columnist Paolo Gregoletto of Trivium explains the bass recording sessions for his new album, *Vengeance Falls*

For our new album *Vengeance Falls*, our producer David Draiman – who is also the singer in the bands Disturbed and Device – asked us not to over-rehearse the material prior to pre-production with him in Austin, Texas. Being a band that rehearses religiously, this seemed out of character for us, but when we started working together at the studio we saw the genius in leaving some of that spontaneity and studio magic: it led to a lot of the best changes and additions to the music.

For my bass playing, it was a similar approach. I knew almost all of the riffs from either writing them or learning them from the other guys on tour, but I wanted to hear where our drummer Nick Augusto's patterns ended up before I solidified what I was going to do. In some cases this meant hearing singer Matt Heafy recording to the final drums and thinking up what the hell I was going to do.

One of my personal goals was to approach the recording as if I were playing live. When I feel comfortable and I'm having fun playing a show I will ad lib fills and extra parts. For the second half of the pre-chorus in 'No Way To Heal', Matt holds out the chords of the progression while our other guitar player, Corey Beaulieu, and I play the melody line in unison. When we repeat the progression I shift up to a third harmony of the melody, which leads into the chorus. This was sort of a role reversal, since nine times out of 10 it will be the guitars doing harmonies together.

Another great example of a last minute addition is the bass solo for 'Incineration (The Broken World)'. It wasn't until about two days before recording the song that we all felt like this one part needed a bass solo. It's a trifecta of solos, first Matt, then Corey, and then finally my moment of glory over a really punishing harmonic minor riff and a Vinnie Paul-inspired kick pattern. We miced up a Peavey 6505 into a Mesa 4x12 and I just made it all up on the spot. It only took about 30 to 40 minutes to come up with the right licks, broken up into three sections. I went for a more tasteful melodic beginning, eventually culminating in a big bass-hero tapping fest.

The intro to the song 'Villainy Thrives' is a classical chord progression Matt came up with after, you guessed it, we decided the song needed a more epic way to start. Instantly I heard my bass doing the same chords but outlining them in a different rhythm and with different note choices then the original. I recorded it twice, one with my regular tone for low end and one with a pick through an overdrive pedal to make each note really pop out. The song is also groovy as hell!

My in-studio rig was the same as my live rig from the previous cycle: a SansAmp DI into an Avalon. We also recorded a clean DI track in case anything needed to be altered after the fact. For the mix I actually travelled over to England to sit in, while Colin Richardson and Carl Bown started putting the album together sonically. They ended up using a SansAmp plugin and an Ampeg plugin to blend together. This allowed them to bring in more of one or the other, and even allowed them to automate the EQ. Hands down, this is the best bass tone I have had on any album.

One other thing that was pretty fun and exciting for the gear nerd in me, was the second track I recorded on every chorus and a few pre-choruses. David asked if I could figure out a way to add one more layer of low end on each part, not intending that it would all be used, but just to have it there in case we felt it needed it in the mix. I tried a few different setups but ultimately used a Morley Power Fuzz Wah, a Pork Loin Overdrive and whatever pick I could find at the time. The reason I used a pick was to retain a little bit of clarity in the nasty tone I made. I feel like the chorus for 'Through Blood And Dirt And Bone' really benefited from this subtle layer. It's not cranked in the mix, but there is an extra darkness to the chorus that is unlike any other on the album.

The writing and pre-production was intense with David – 10am to 10pm for two weeks straight! The recording was a breeze after that, and honestly it was one of the most fun and memorable album-making experiences I have ever had. ■

***Vengeance Falls* is out now on Roadrunner. Info: www.trivium.org.**

Elixir® Strings for Bass
Your tone. Your feel.

Great tone, smooth feel, consistent performance from gig to gig. Bass strings that sound better for longer, removing the hassle and expense of frequent string changes.

The NANOWEB® Coating on our Stainless Steel and Nickel Plated Steel Bass Strings is more durable, delivers unparalleled tone life and also raises the bar in tone, feel and response.

Bass players tell us *Elixir* Strings retain their tone longer than any other string, uncoated or coated.

Yolanda Charles plays *Elixir* Strings Nickel Plated Electric Bass with NANOWEB® Coating, Medium Gauge .045 - .105

www.elixirstrings.co.uk/bass

facebook.com/elixirstrings
twitter.com/elixirstrings
youtube.com/elixirstringsmedia

GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE • LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2013 W. L. Gore & Associates, (UK) Limited

ELX-267-ADV-UK-JUL13

MUSIC MAN
Classic Sabre

Stuart Clayton rattles his Sabre. But is this a full-blown bass attack or just a shot across the bows?

Contact Details

Strings and Things
www.stringsandthings.com

For the majority of the low-end community, Music Man basses need no introduction. With their distinctive appearance and equally distinctive tones, many of us have either owned or lusted after a Music Man, be it a Stingray, a Bongo, or a Sabre. Little wonder then that the company has attracted a wealth of top-name endorsees over the last three decades – Flea, Tony Levin, Nick Beggs and John Myung are all part of the family.

The Sabre Classic – one of the company's late 2012 offerings – is for many Music Man aficionados a welcome return for one of their lesser-known models. Originally released back in late 1978, the Sabre was never able to match the wide-scale popularity of the Music Man Stingray, despite offering an additional pickup and an expanded tonal palette. The Sabre was modified slightly throughout the 80s (notably, the original three toggle controls were swapped for a slide switch in 1983) then quietly discontinued in 1991. The reappearance of the Sabre in late 2012 marked the first new models in over 20 years.

BUILD QUALITY

Straight out of the Music Man hardshell case, the US-built Sabre Classic is undeniably a gorgeous looking instrument: the neck and fingerboard of our test instrument were constructed of highly figured birdseye maple, with both pieces clearly having started life as the same section of wood. Following the installation of the truss rod, they've been carefully recombined here, appearing once again as a single piece. Set against the black logo decals and dot markers and combined with the chrome hardware, the effect is stunning.

Our test bass featured a black lacquered ash body with a top-loading chrome-plated hardened steel bridge, complete with mute pads. There are two pickups: a 16-pole humbucker in neck position and an eight-pole humbucker at the bridge. Both use Alnico magnets and in contrast to the original Sabre, have solid covers, denying the bass one of the classic Music Man visual cues – the large, exposed pole pieces.

Unscrewing the front control plate, we gained access to the electronics cavity and were greeted by an impeccably clean compartment and neat soldering. All of the wiring was well-organised and rubber shrinkwrap had been used to keep things tidy. All of the controls were well-seated and felt impressively substantial. Access to the 9V battery was via a screwed-in chrome panel on the rear of the instrument.

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

In use the bass certainly feels substantial: it's a little on the heavy side, weighing in at over 10lbs, although its balance when seated was excellent, with no neck dive evident during our testing. Balance was equally good while standing. The 21-fret neck has a thick C profile, adding to its overall sense of chunkiness, but the high gloss finish made it quick and easy to get around. Edge contouring (the original Sabre was the first Music Man bass to feature this) was ample in all the right

places, making extended periods of playing – and there were many – very comfortable.

The Sabre Classic has an active two-band preamp and sports a slightly simpler control set when compared to the original model. Whereas the first version had three toggle switches mounted above each control (for pickup selection, phase and bright boost) the newer model features the slide selector switch that was found on the later models of the original bass. This selector has five positions: in position one (closest to the bridge) coils one and two (found on the bridge pickup) are used, meaning that only the bridge pickup is used. In the second position, coils one, two and three are used – coil three is found on the neck pickup. In the third position all four coils are used, in the fourth only coil three is used and in the final position coils three and four are used (this is obviously the same as only using the neck pickup). The three rotary controls are master volume, treble and bass. The bass is fitted with Music Man's patented Silent Circuit, which 'reduces hum and retains true single-coil sound'.

Plugging in, my first observation was that all five of the pickup selections yield noticeably different tones, all while retaining the classic Music Man 'glug'. In position one (bridge pickup only) the tone is as one would expect: punchy, with some suitably honky-sounding upper mids – it's a lively tone that's perfectly suited to fingerstyle funk grooves and is great if you're looking for a tone that will cut through an unfriendly mix. In position two, the third coil is added, resulting in a little more grunt that thickens up an already decent fingerstyle tone. Position three yielded a good all-round tone that would work well in most situations – I found that this position served as my starting point every time I used the bass, as it worked well for fingerstyle, slap and picked lines. Moving to position four, the result is a very woody front pickup tone that uses only the third coil. This made for an excellent old-school slap tone that offered a solid low end combined with a pleasing upper midrange punch. The final position (neck pickup only) thickened up the tone from the previous position, adding in more low-end – again, very usable. Further adjustments to each of these positions using the basic treble and bass controls meant that I was able to further refine my preferred tones.

The string mutes mounted at the bridge were also very effective. These can be raised or lowered by turning the screws mounted in front of each and, as it's possible to adjust each one individually, you can fine-tune the muting so that each string is dampened to the same degree. As a bassist who often places foam or cloth under the strings for a dampened Carol Kaye-like tone, I found these particularly useful and couldn't help wishing I had them on my regular basses. Fingerstyle Jamerson-style grooves worked a treat with the mutes engaged, as did vintage picking lines.

CONCLUSION

It's probably obvious that the Sabre Classic has made a very positive impact on me. It's an excellent instrument in every way: it looks great, it plays like a dream and it's versatile. The tone is distinctive however you use it, but with tones like these, that's no bad thing. At £2030 RRP this won't be an easy purchase for anyone, especially considering that vintage models can often be found on the second-hand market for a similar price or less. That being said, we're sure that there are many Music Man fans who will be delighted to see the return of the Sabre. ■

Technical Specification

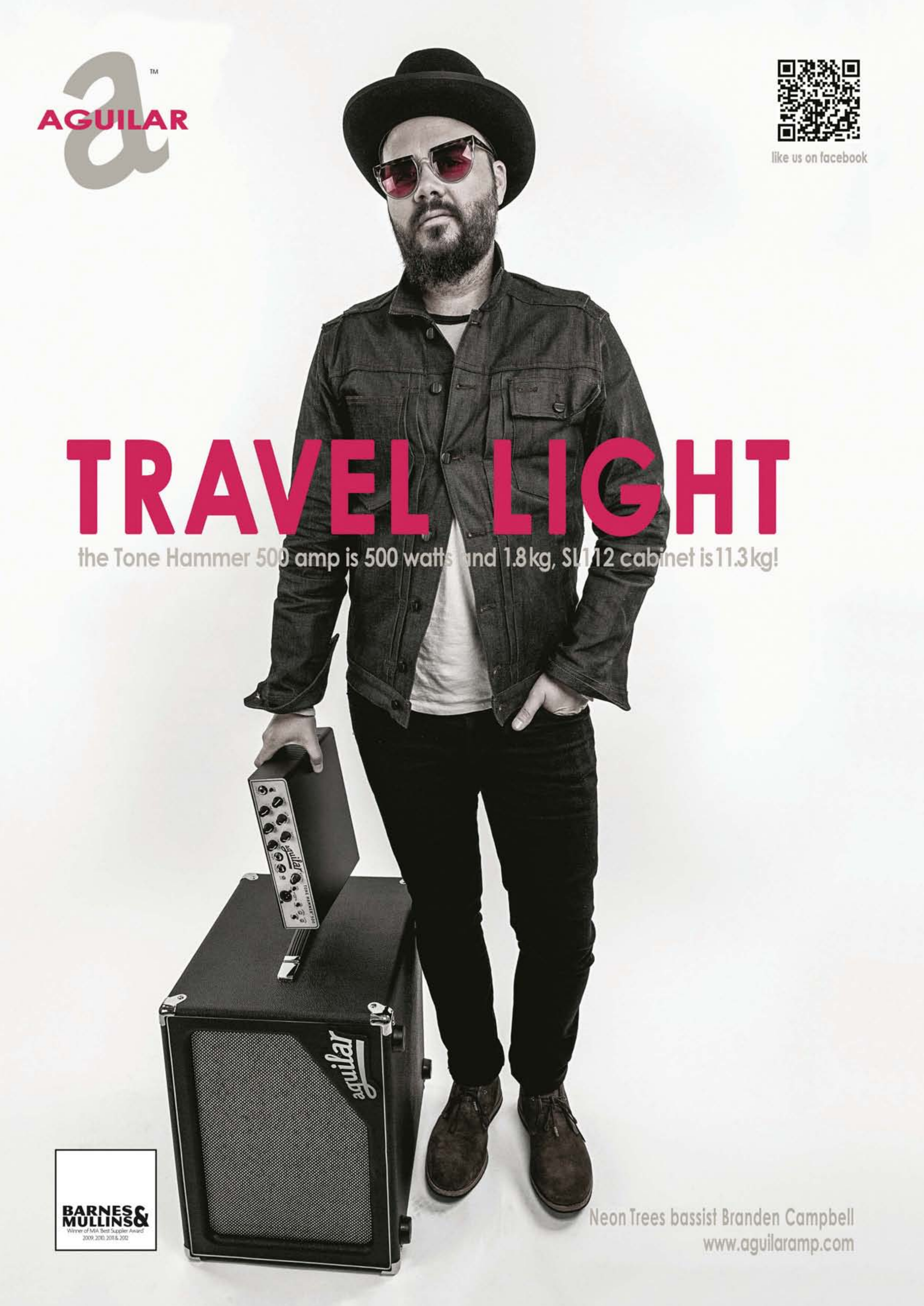
BODY WOOD | Ash
BODY FINISH | Standard Classic Collection colours
BRIDGE | Music Man top-loading chrome-plated, hardened steel bridge plate with 'Classic' stainless steel saddles and adjustable mute pads
FRETS | 21, high-profile, wide
NECK WOOD | Choice of birdseye or flame maple
FINGERBOARD | Maple or rosewood
NECK FINISH | High-gloss polyester
NECK COLOURS | Natural aged yellow finish
TUNING MACHINES | Schaller BM, with tapered string posts
TRUSS ROD | Adjustable, no component or string removal
NECK JOIN | Six bolts
CONTROLS | Two-band active preamp; volume, treble, bass
SWITCHING | Five-way lever pickup selector
PICKUPS | Standard: (neck) 16-pole humbucker, (bridge) 8-pole humbucker, both with Alnico magnets and solid black covers. PatentedMusic Man 'Silent Circuit'

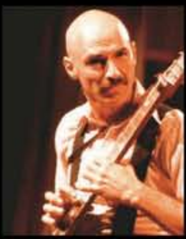
What We Think

PLUS | A cracking instrument. Great tones, looks cool. Don't want to give it back
MINUS | A little on the heavy side
OVERALL | A lovely bass, well worth a look

BGM Rating

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★★★★★★
SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★★★★★★
VALUE ★★★★★★★☆☆☆


AGUILAR
like us on facebook
TRAVEL LIGHT
the Tone Hammer 500 amp is 500 watts and 1.8kg, SL112 cabinet is 11.3kg!
aguilar
TONE HAMMER 500
aguilar
BARNES & MULLINS
Winner of MIA 'Best Supplier Award'
2009, 2010, 2011 & 2012
Neon Trees bassist Branden Campbell
www.aguilaramp.com



"With the Radial JDI, my bass comes through extremely clean, very quiet, and with a smooth transparent low end. I use my JDI for everything."

~Tony Levin
(Peter Gabriel, King Crimson, Paul Simon, John Lennon)

"When it comes to choosing a DI, I don't want to know the box is there. It has to translate my playing without it feeling compressed or limited in any way. The Radial JDV delivers my bass the way I want to hear it."

~Victor Wooten
(The Flecktones, Bass Extremes)

"The Radial BigShot MIX blends in distortion so I don't lose my bass tone. It works great!"

~Billy Sheehan
(Mr. Big, Steve Vai, 5-time winner: Guitar Player magazine 'best rock bassist')

"Love at first sound... The Radial JDI produces a clean, transparent, bass tone with plenty of punch. I use it for all my recordings and live shows and always get great results. It is the Rosetta Stone of DI's. Thank you Radial."

~Mark Egan
(Pat Metheny, Joan Osborne, Sting, Marianne Faithfull)

"Whether I'm performing live or in the studio, I rely on my Radial JDI for my sound and it delivers every time! I never leave home without my JDI!"

~Nathan East
(Eric Clapton, Toni Braxton, Lionel Richie, Phil Collins)

"Radial has made it simple for us musicians who don't necessarily want to be 'on-the-gig programmers'. Whether I'm in the studio or playing live, I'm never without my Bassbone!"

~Will Lee
(Billy Joel, Donald Fagen, George Benson, Letterman, Dave Matthews, Spyro Gyra)

"The Radial Bassbone gives me 2 channels so I can use my electric and acoustic basses with only one channel on my amp, and the clean, built-in DI sounds consistently great!"

~John Patitucci
(Wayne Shorter, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Bon Jovi)

"I've been using the Radial J48 direct box for years and I am convinced it is the best featured and best sounding DI available today."

~Ric Fierabracci
(Chick Corea, Billy Cobham, Andy Summers/Sting, Shakira)

Five reasons bass players love Radial...

1 JDI™ passive DI

"Vintage vibe personified"

Hit it hard and the Radial JDI smoothes out the transient edge to deliver a natural smooth tone reminiscent of the glory days. Ideal for active bass, samplers and synthesizers.

2 JDV™ class-A direct box

"All the tone, no hype"

The Radial JDV's unique feed-forward class-A circuit design delivers purity beyond compare. The ultimate DI box for upright, electric bass, acoustic bass and more.

3 J48™ active phantom DI

"The go anywhere DI"

The J48 outperforms all other phantom powered DI's with lower harmonic distortion, greater phase accuracy and warm even order harmonics. Perfect for bass, electric and acoustic guitar.

4 Bassbone™ preamp and DI

"It's all about control"

Two inputs and two channels with a powerful EQ that gives you complete control of the tone to your amp, PA mixer or recording setup. Featuring a built-in Radial DI, power booster, effects loop and tuner out. Cool!

5 BigShot MIX™ effects mixer

"Maximum tone retention"

The MIX is a unique device that lets you mix in effects like you do on a mixing console, without messing with your tone. Perfect for bass players that want to add a touch of distortion or chorus without killing off the bottom end!

Radial engineering
...power tools for power players℠
radialeng.com

1588 Kebet Way, Port Coquitlam BC V3C 5M5 tel: 604-942-1001 email: info@radialeng.com

Authorized Distributors:

Belgium: FACE-BE face-be.eu	**Czech Republic:** MUSIC DATA musicdata.cz	**Denmark:** ALFA AUDIO alfaaudio.dk	**Finland:** MSONIC msonic.fi	**France:** ARBITER arbiterfrance.com	**Germany:** SHURE DISTRIBUTION shuredistribution.de	**Italy:** GRISBY MUSIC grisby.it	**Netherlands:** TM AUDIO tmaudio.nl
Norway: DRAMMEN drammenlyd.no	**Poland:** LAUDA AUDIO lauda-audio.pl	**Spain:** SEESOUND seesound.es	**Sweden:** ARVA TRADING arva.se	**Switzerland:** MGM AUDIO mgmaudio.ch	**Turkey:** AKALIN akalinmuzik.com.tr	**U.A.E.:** MELODY HOUSE melodyhouse.ae	**United Kingdom:** SHURE DISTRIBUTION UK shuredistribution.co.uk

Copyright ©2011 Radial Engineering Ltd. Appearance and specifications subject to change without notice

TOKAI JAZZ SOUND

Joel Graham gets to grips with this slice of Eastern goodness

Japanese guitar manufacturers Tokai truly are the masters of the imitation – and have been for some considerable time now. In the late 70s and early 80s, their instruments were shipped across the globe, with purists shocked to discover that not only were their copies of original Fenders and Gibsons flying off the shelf, they were actually preferred by many professional players to the real thing. These so-called 'lawsuit guitars' took the exact shape and build of the originals but were given dodgy names such as the 'Springy Sound' (Stratocaster) and 'Love Rock Model' (Les Paul), but even so, their quality was not to be sniffed at. So much so in fact, that after a few years Tokai received the ultimate acknowledgement of how good their guitars were when they were commissioned by Fender to build the giant US company's Japanese solid-body models.

Browsing though internet bass forums, you will come across an abundance of reviews and many words of praise for the Tokai Jazz Sound bass, particularly the 1980s models. Many bassists claimed to have purchased a Jazz Sound as a cheaper alternative to the original, only to find themselves more than satisfied with their purchase – and in many cases never getting round to buying the original 'big brother' version.

When the opportunity arrived to play one of Tokai's recent Jazz Sound basses, as a long-term Fender Jazz player, I grabbed the chance to sit down it and find out exactly the differences lie – if indeed there are any…

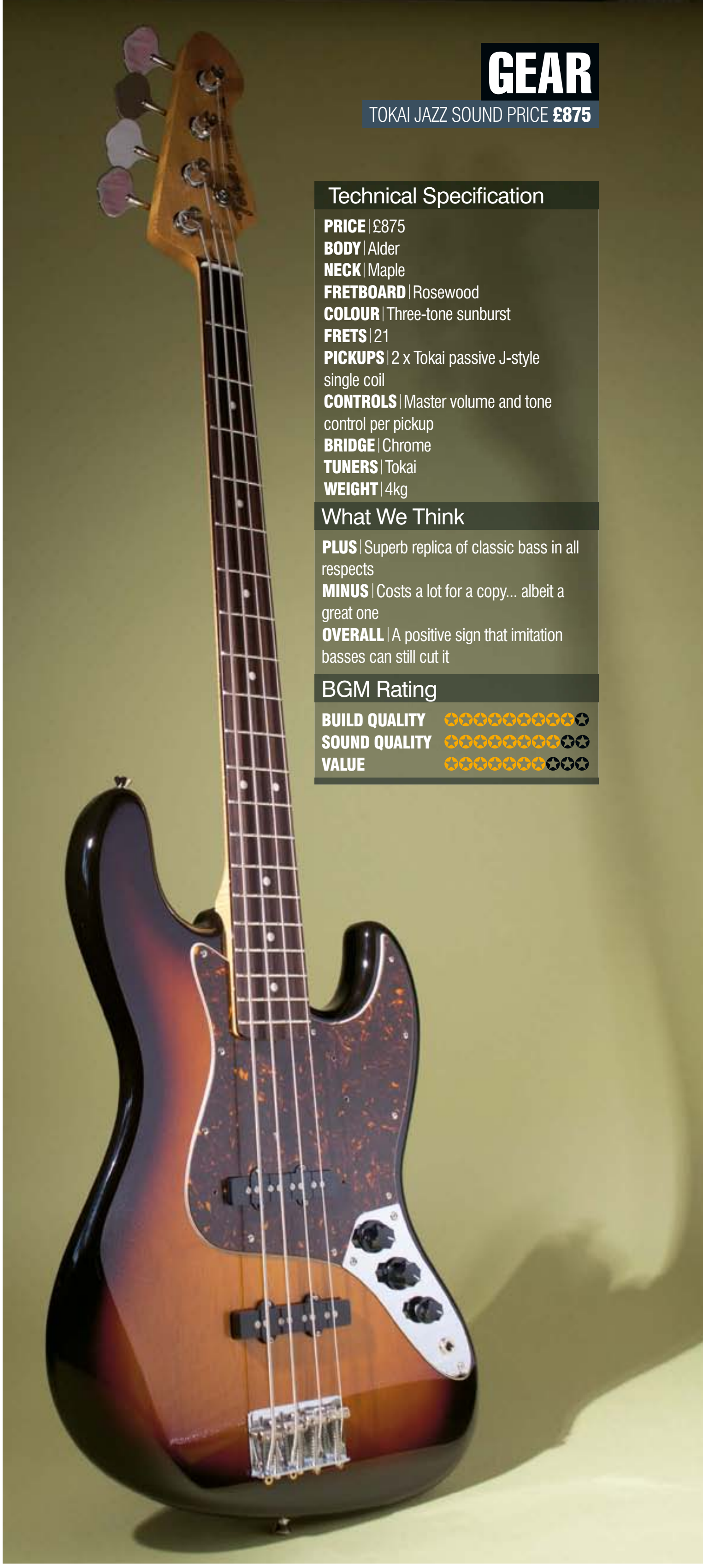
BUILD QUALITY

Obviously, the first thing you notice before any handling of the Jazz Sound takes place is just how much it looks like an original J-bass. There is no mistaking that iconic shape: the headstock is ever so slightly sharpened in its cut, but other than that, there are minimal visual differences between this and the Fender. On handling the Tokai, the comparisons become even harder to distinguish. The Jazz Sound feels slightly lighter than a standard J, but certainly not by much, and with that smooth gloss finish and the robust shiny hardware, it ticks all the Jazz boxes. Its balance when using a strap is excellent, as is the contouring on the back of the body, making this a guitar to play with comfort whether seated or standing.

The body of this bass is alder, finished with a classic unblemished three-tone sunburst, which looks classy and correct for this style of bass. OK, by 'correct', what I'm really trying to say is 'familiar' – proving to myself that the aesthetics of this bass are luring me in to a safe

> "THERE IS NO MISTAKING THAT ICONIC SHAPE: THE HEADSTOCK IS EVER SO SLIGHTLY SHARPENED IN ITS CUT, BUT OTHER THAN THAT, THERE ARE MINIMAL VISUAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THIS AND THE FENDER"

Contact Details
Manchester Bass Lounge
www.manchesterbasslounge.com



Technical Specification

PRICE | £875
BODY | Alder
NECK | Maple
FRETBOARD | Rosewood
COLOUR | Three-tone sunburst
FRETS | 21
PICKUPS | 2 x Tokai passive J-style single coil
CONTROLS | Master volume and tone control per pickup
BRIDGE | Chrome
TUNERS | Tokai
WEIGHT | 4kg

What We Think

PLUS | Superb replica of classic bass in all respects
MINUS | Costs a lot for a copy... albeit a great one
OVERALL | A positive sign that imitation basses can still cut it

BGM Rating

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

place even though I've yet to play a note. The neck and headstock are maple and the fingerboard is rosewood, with inserted dot fret markers, which give the instrument a vintage vibe. The final touch is the hardware, which is – as you might expect – chunky: chrome-finished tuners, a J-Bass bridge, and a thickened back plate, which complete the classic Jazz look.

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

With appearance out of the way, is the Jazz Sound really that close to a classic Jazz when it comes to making a true comparison? Well, the neck width certainly feels that way, with its smooth varnished finish enabling your fretting hand to walk up the neck with great ease. Fingerstyle, slapping and popping, and space for picking over the two Tokai J-style neck and bridge pickups are all catered for here. The bass sustains perfectly, and pulling harmonics out of this was a breeze. The limited effort required to do this is something I really have to touch on, as the action was really well set up on our review model: although it was low, there was zero fret-buzz anywhere on this neck, and although it feels a little blasphemous to say so, the action was much better than any that I've ever been able to get from a Mexican Fender Jazz, for example. Higher up the neck, the bottom cutaway enabled perfect access to the high frets, and tapping the strings high up the neck produced clear, bright tones.

The bass features three tone controls, one for each of the pickups and a master tone control. All of these are easy to set: playing this bass via an amp with a flat EQ the bass kicked out that punch of a Jazz bass with a bright tone that is richer in the midrange and treble. As I said, it's all safe and familiar.

CONCLUSION

There are really no complaints to be made about a bass guitar of this design and quality. It looks great, it plays amazingly well and it sounds great, although there is one thing that holds the Tokai Jazz Sound back from being snapped up by every bass player, and in this case it's a biggie. Any experienced player has at some point deliberated between instruments, and when it comes to the case of 'copies' or whatever you want to call them, opinions will always be split right down the middle. You can either save up that bit longer for that original, the one with the familiar logo emblazed across its headstock, or you'll be happy to spend that bit less cash for a bass with a different logo if the guitar works for you right then and there.

Tokai, and in particular their Jazz Sound, certainly challenges the preconception of 'original is best' and doesn't fit into the above scenario due to it being (almost!) as good as the Fender Standard Jazz. However, at £875 – even though that is a fair value for a bass of this quality – it may seem just a little pricey to take a gamble on, in comparison to the original bass on which it is based. Look on it not as a cheaper alternative, but as a great replica of a fantastic, classic bass guitar. ■

THE LONDON BASS GUITAR SHOW 2014

IN ASSOCIATION WITH **BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE**

WE'RE BACK FOR 2014

1-2 MARCH 2014

DOORS OPEN 10AM-6PM

OLYMPIA CONFERENCE CENTRE

TICKETS ON SALE NOW – DAY TICKET PRICE £20

WEEKEND TICKETS ONLY £30

01926 339808

WWW.LONDONBASSGUITARSHOW.COM

TRUSTED ON STAGE

www.herculesstands.co.uk www.herculesstands.com

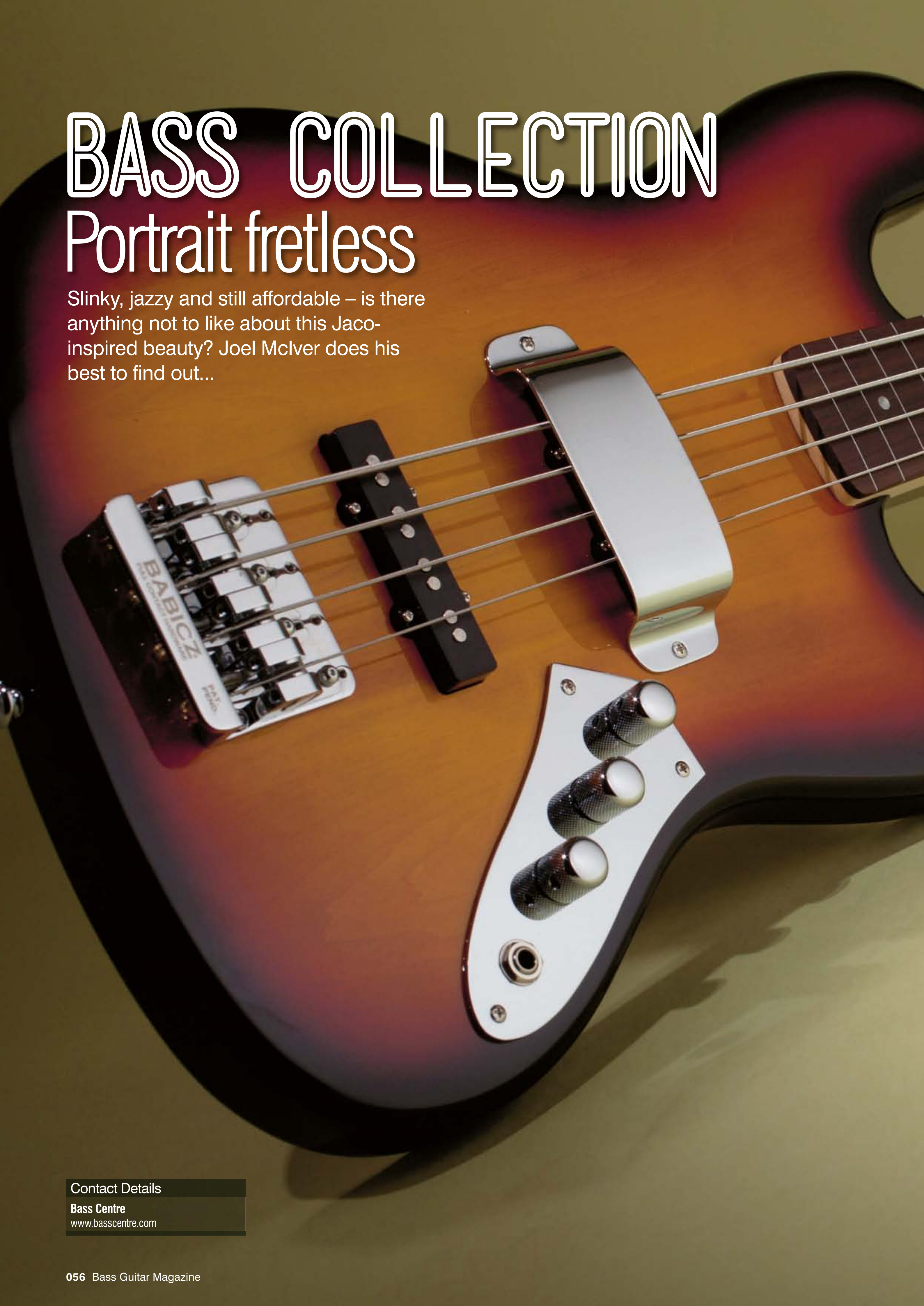
WHATEVER YOUR BAND, WE'VE GOT A STAND

HERCULES®
STANDS

BASS COLLECTION

Portrait fretless

Slinky, jazzy and still affordable – is there anything not to like about this Jaco-inspired beauty? Joel McIver does his best to find out...



Contact Details

Bass Centre
www.basscentre.com

Bass Collection basses have been building a reputation in recent years as reliable, well-built and eminently usable instruments, but we suspect even the company themselves wouldn't claim that their name is as exciting as, say industry-leading titans whose names begin with F, W and MM. They are, most of us would conclude, just another in a long line of mid-priced basses, neither significantly more or less playable than their dozens of competitors.

Well, here's a Bass Collection model that fares rather better than averagely when under test. This Portrait four-string, sleek and fretless, does a great job of emulating the Fender Jazz whose body shape it emulates so accurately. How does it sound under our merciless fingers?

BUILD QUALITY

Pick up the Portrait and you'll find the body balance pleasing and solid without being too heavy: like us, you've probably played so many basses in your time that you recognise a decently sustaining chunk of wood when you strap one on. This sums up the Portrait: pluck a note unplugged and it'll ring out gently for ages. The quality of the components seems fine to us, although there are as ever areas for improvement: the neck pickup cover is a big enough chunk of metal, although whether it'll stand up to repeated bashing is another matter. The tuners operate smoothly and the bridge is built like a tank.

Wait, this thing hasn't got any frets! Come on, you know we're kidding. We love a good fretless at the *BGM* command bunker, and indeed this is a decent one, unlike some planks we're sent from time to time. The neck is traditional in profile, so don't expect a shreddy feel and do expect a feeling of solidity that anchors the most fluid playing. The fret markers are clear and unobtrusive, too, and if you feel that 20 of them limits your playing too much, you're probably playing the wrong bass. This is a traditional bit of gear, daddio, and after all, if it was good enough for Jaco…

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

As we said above, this isn't a super-slick soloist's instrument by any means: the neck simply isn't set up that way, and you don't have enough upper register to trouble the guitar frequencies anyway. What the Portrait seeks to do, and manages to do so very successfully, is provide a traditional platform for fretless playing in a recognisable idiom that has very little to do with modern experimentation. Anyone with the smallest fretless experience will recognise this bass's feel: it's big, heavy, expressive and requires some finger strength. Supply those elements and you'll be away, growling out those vintage fretless lines and licks like they did in 1970, 1980, 1990 and so on.

While the Portrait's feel won't surprise you, the breadth of its tone range may. With its simple volume and two tone controls, you'll find it easy to gauge the sound of the two Jazz pickups (one stashed under that metallic Bridge Of Sighs, as Lemmy calls it) and tweak them to suit your gig. The toppy tone at the upper end will work fine for busier lines, but we suspect that most players will opt for the obvious, fatter, low-end tone that suits traditional fretless lines. It's a tone that's easy to get and even easier to love.

CONCLUSION

You can rely on the Portrait to give you what you need, assuming of course that what you need doesn't stray too far from the remit of the standard fretless tone and feel and all that they imply. It's a fun bass to play. There are better fretless instruments and more expensive ones, too – but we reckon that the exchange of cash for quality is a reasonable one in this instance. We can't imagine anyone being seriously disappointed by the Portrait, and while that may not sound like a ringing endorsement, believe us: in this unreliable day and age, it's that and more. ■

Technical Specification

PRICE | £495
MADE IN | Korea
BODY | Basswood
NECK | Satin finish, maple (super slim profile) with four-bolt neck plate
FINGERBOARD | Lined fretless, 20 fret markers, rosewood
PICKUPS | Twin vintage style single coils
CONTROLS | Two volume pots, one tone pot
BRIDGE | Babicz Full Contact hardware
TUNERS | Chrome
WEIGHT | 4kg

What We Think

PLUS | Plays smoothly, wallet-friendly price tag
MINUS | A bit too trad for some modernists
OVERALL | An excellent Jaco tribute

BGM Rating

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★★★☆☆☆
SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★★★★☆☆
VALUE ★★★★★★★★☆☆

EDEN I-90 Bass Chorus

Small but mighty, Eden's latest chorus packs a feisty punch, says Joel McIver

We were big fans of Eden's bass preamp, the WTDI, when it landed on our desks last year, so we've been looking forward to their new I-90 chorus unit ever since Eden gave us the nod that it was on its way a while back. OK, we're suckers for gold bling...

Small but solid, the I-90 feels immediately as if you could stand an elephant on it (but don't try that at home) and it would still function. Sure, the on-off switch is weeny, so seven-foot bassists with size 18 boots may find it a little hard to find mid-solo, but that's a minor detail. The controls are heavy-duty and the labels readable, though, so have no fears about the gizmo's usability on stage.

To business. The four controls are pretty obvious, from left to right featuring Speed, Depth, Low Cut and Mix Level. The last of these is effectively the master blend, lifting and lowering the immediately identifiable swooshy chorus effect in and out of your dry sound, while Low Cut is a useful device which cuts the low end of the effect without cutting the bass signal. The fun stuff, of course, happens with the Speed and Depth controls, as anyone who spent their teenage years fiddling with any chorus you could name from the 70s and onward will tell you.

At full right, Speed (or low frequency oscillator rate) is hilarious, giving your tone that rapid, wibbly vibrato that will turn your audience's digestive systems to jelly if you play loud enough. At the opposite end the I-90 gives you a mysterious sweeping chorus that fretless and ERB bassists will love. Depth adjusts the intensity of the chorus effect itself, allowing you to add a tiny amount for extra resonance or the full measure for an otherwordly aura.

Now listen. There are lots of chorus pedals around: bass players are spoiled for choice. The Eden isn't the most sophisticated of the lot, but it's certainly the most robust we've seen for £100 plus change. Its effect isn't radically different to those of most of its competitors, but it does allow for subtlety and easy adjustment and as such, gets our thumbs up. Its USP is its solidity: if you're thinking of upgrading that nasty plastic chorus from the 80s, the I-90 might just be the right option. ■

> "THE EDEN ISN'T THE MOST SOPHISTICATED OF THE LOT, BUT IT'S CERTAINLY THE MOST ROBUST WE'VE SEEN FOR £100 PLUS CHANGE"

Technical Specification

PRICE | £113.04 inc VAT
CONTROLS | Speed, Depth, Low Cut, Mix Level
MAX INPUT | 9.5dBV@500Hz
SPEED | 0.5Hz to 8Hz
BLEND | Sweepable 30Hz to 10KHz
WEIGHT | 567g/1.25lb
POWER | AC

What We Think

PLUS | Solidly built, heritage brand
MINUS | Other similar competitors exist
OVERALL | Definitely worth a try-out

BGM Rating

BUILD QUALITY 9/10 stars
SOUND QUALITY 7/10 stars
VALUE 8/10 stars

FLIP YOUR TOP ALL OVER AGAIN

The original Ampeg B-15 Portaflex is the most sought-after and widely recorded bass amp in history. The flip-top cabs and double-baffle design have been revolutionary since the early '60s and they're still badass today. With the Heritage B-15N, you can have this classic design in a superbly authentic reissue. Need some more power? Explore a modern take on the Ampeg classic with the new Portaflex Series. Choose from three different high-wattage lightweight heads, two different flip-top cabs or the versatile ported extension cabs. Mix-and-match to create the ultimate Ampeg Portaflex. Genuine Ampeg tone in your own custom configuration.

THE ROUND SOUND

ampeg.com

Copyright © 2013 LOUD Technologies Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Exclusive UK distribution POLAR audio | www.polaraudio.co.uk | tel: (+44) 01444 258258

PROMENADE MUSIC

01524 410 202
www.promenademusic.co.uk

4 String Basses

10067 - Brian May Bass in Cherry with Gig Bag
10108 - Cort A4 4 String Bass Guitar, Natural
10107 - Cort A4 Custom Z 4 String Bass Guitar

Fender

4882 - Fender USA 62 Vintage Precision Sunburst
10166 - Fender 75 Jazz Bass in Natural
9083 - Fender Am Special Jazz Bass, Sunburst
9353 - Fender Am St Hand Stained Ash Jazz Bass
9231 - Fender Am Standard Jazz Bass, Sunburst
7943 - Fender Am Stan Precision Bass, Sunburst
9727 - Fender FSR Precision, Sea Foam Metallic
8113 - Fender Modern Player Available To Order
9367 - Fender Select Jazz Bass, Amber Burst
9284 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass, Arctic White
8287 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass, Brown S.burst
9909 - Fender Standard P Bass, Lake Placid Blue
10113 - G & L M2000 4 String Bass Guitar, Honeyburst
9703 - G & L Tribute Series JB2, Natural
9138 - G&L L2000 Tribute Bass, 3-Tone Sunburst

Gibson

9593 - Gibson Firebird Studio Reverse 70s Bass
9575 - Gibson Grabber 3 '70s Tribute Honeyburst
10074 - Gretsch G6073 Electrotone Bass, Burgundy
10418 - Ibanez ARTB100 White, Pre-Owned

LEVIN

4999 - Levin LB100J, Antique Sunburst
6640 - Levin LB200, Cherry Sunburst
6780 - Levin LB400, Redburst

Lodestone

8073 - Lodestone Primal Artist
8075 - Lodestone Primal Instinct J Bass, Green
8079 - Lodestone Primal Instinct P Bass, Green
8080 - Lodestone Primal Instinct Pbass Sunburst
8081 - Lodestone Primal Pro in Chignal Blue
8082 - Lodestone Primal Pro 4, Tobacco Sunburst
10279 - Marleaux Consat Sig 4 String Bolt On
10278 - Marleaux Votan XS Deluxe, Black

MUSIC MAN

10216 - MusicMan Sterling 4, Blue, Pre-Owned
4703 - MusicMan Stingray 2EQ, Blue Pearl
4781 - MusicMan Stingray 3EQ, True Gold
8997 - Musicman Sterling SB14 Bass, Sunburst

Overwater

8435 - Overwater Aspiration Std 4, Black Cherry
7849 - Overwater Contemporary Jazz, Trans Blue
9867 - Overwater Inspiration Jazz PJ 4 String
10102 - Overwater J Series Deluxe 4, Natural
10152 - Overwater Progress Deluxe, Pre-Owned
9418 - Rickenbacker Bass, Jetglo Rick Kemp

Squier

7204 - Squier Classic Vibe Precision 50s Blonde
9072 - Squier Vintage Modified 70's Jazz, Nat
9517 - Squier Vintage Modified Tele Bass, Black
9704 - Stagg BC300 Lefthanded 4 String, Nat

STEINBERGER

4417 - Steinberger Spirit XT2 4 String Bass
9428 - Tobias Toby Standard IV Bass Guitar, White

WestCoast

6447 - Westcoast BG2, Natural or Trans Red
6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
8438 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Black
8437 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Trans Red

YAMAHA

10120 - Yamaha BB1024X 4 String, Caramel Brown
4649 - Yamaha BB2024X, Vintage White
9000 - Yamaha RBX170
10314 - Yamaha RBX170EW Bass
4331 - Yamaha TRB1004J, Trans Black

5 String Basses

10109 - Cort A5 5 String Bass, Open Pore Natural
10105 - Cort A5 OPBC Bass Guitar
10110 - Cort B5 5 String Bass Guitar, OPN
10213 - Cort GB75WBL 5 String Bass, White Blonde
10112 - G & L M2500 5 String Bass, Honeyburst
9702 - G&L L2500 5 String Bass, Walnut
8174 - Lodestone Primal Pro 5, Chignal Blue
4179 - Marleaux Consat Custom 5, Satin Black
5713 - Marleaux M Bass Custom 5, Maple & Walnut
4920 - MusicMan Stingray 5, Black

Overwater

9002 - Overwater Aspiration Deluxe Bass, Black
9009 - Overwater Contemporary 5-String Bass
7259 - Overwater Perception Std 5, Bubinga
5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black
6448 - Westcoast JB5, Trans Amber
9351 - Yamaha BB425 5 String Bass Guitar, Black
9352 - Yamaha BB425 5 String Bass, Sunburst
8999 - Yamaha RBX5A2 5 String Bass, Black
10308 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass
10310 - Yamaha TRBX505 Bass

Acoustic Basses

Breedlove

8687 - Breedlove Passport Plus B350/CB4
10297 - Breedlove Solo BJ350/CMe4 Fretless

LEVIN

5393 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Black
5394 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Natural
5392 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
6782 - Levin LB100 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst

Electric Upright Basses

4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass

Fretless Basses

6445 - Westcoast BG5 Fretless, Natural

String Deals

2 Sets of Elite (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Elite (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £35 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £40 inc P&P

Bass Combos

6762 - A arena BASS45 (45W, 1x12)
5627 - AER Amp One (200W, 1x10)
4942 - AER Amp Two (240W, 1x12)

Ashdown Engineering

4389 - Ashdown 220 Touring 112 (220W, 1x12)
4388 - Ashdown 220 Touring 115 (220W, 1x15)
4385 - Ashdown 330 Touring 115H (300W, 1x15)
4382 - Ashdown 550 Touring (550W, 1x15)
5066 - Ashdown 550 Touring Hybrid (550W, 2x10)
6759 - Ashdown ABM C115 500 Evo 3 (575w, 1 x15)
8712 - Ashdown ABM414H 4 x 10 Bass Cabinet
8714 - Ashdown After Eight 20 Bass Combo
4396 - Ashdown DP200 Drophead 15H (200W, 1x15)
8757 - Ashdown Electric Blue 12 220
8758 - Ashdown Electric Blue EB15 220
5669 - Ashdown EB180 12 Evo2 (180W, 1x12)
5668 - Ashdown EB180 15 Evo2 (180W, 1x15)
8751 - Ashdown Five Fifteen ABM100 Bass Combo
8753 - Ashdown Five Fifteen Mini Rig 100
4397 - Ashdown LB30 Drophead 115H (30W, 1x15)
8718 - Ashdown Mag C115 300 Evo III Bass Combo
8722 - Ashdown Mag C210T 300 Evo III Bass Combo
8720 - Ashdown Mag C210T 300 Bass Combo
8727 - Ashdown Mag C410T 600 Evo III
9320 - Ashdown MiBass C110-200
9321 - Ashdown MiBass C115 550 Bass Combo
8750 - Ashdown Perfect Ten 40 Bass Combo
9311 - Ashdown TE12 C115h Bass Combo
9310 - Ashdown TE12 C210h 12 Band Bass Combo
5224 - Ashdown Tourbus 10 (10W, 1x6.5)
5062 - Ashdown Tourbus 15 (15W, 1x8)
8987 - Eden Nemesis RS410 Combo

Fender

4238 - Fender Rumble 15 (15W, 1x8)
8284 - Fender Rumble 30 Bass Combo
4237 - Fender Rumble 350 (350W, 2x10)
4772 - Fender Rumble 75 Watt Bass Combo

Hartke

10104 - Hartke A35 35W Bass Combo
9278 - Hartke A70 Solid State Bass Amp Combo
9471 - Hartke David Ellefson A70 Bass Combo
9008 - Hartke HMH112C Bass Combo
9281 - Hartke Hydrive HMH210C Bass Combo
9279 - Hartke Kickback 15 Bass Amp Combo
6020 - Line6 LowDown Studio 110 (75W, 1x10)

Mark bass

9004 - Markbass 121 Lite Alain Caron Combo
6239 - Mark Bass CMD102P Bass Combo
6238 - Mark Bass CMD103H (400W, 3x10)
5475 - Mark Bass CMD121H (300W, 1x12)
5472 - Mark Bass CMD151P J Berlin (300W,1x15)
5473 - Mark Bass Micromark (50W, 1x6)
6240 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P (300W, 1x12)
5474 - Mark Bass Mini CMD151P (300W, 1x15W)
5471 - Mark Bass Minimark (250W, 2x6)
9940 - Markbass Mini CMD 151 Jeff Berlin Combo
9939 - Markbass MiniMark 802 Bass Combo

Marshall

9644 - Marshall Bass State 150 150W Bass Combo
5660 - Marshall MB15 (15W, 1x8)
6768 - Marshall MB150 (150W, 1x15)
5659 - Marshall MB30 (30w, 1x10)
5433 - Marshall MB4210 (450W, 2x10)
5658 - Marshall MB4410 (450W, 4x10)
6769 - Marshall MB60 (60W, 1x12)
9938 - MicroMark 801 Bass Combo

ORANGE

5234 - Orange Crush PiX 25BX (25W, 1x8)
5233 - Orange Crush PiX 50BXT (50W, 1x12)
10265 - Orange Crush Pix CR100BXT
10264 - Orange Terror Bass 500 Bass Amp Combo
8061 - Peavey MAX126 10 Watt Bass Amp Combo
5965 - Peavey Max 112 (35W, 1x12)
5964 - Peavey Max 115 (50W, 1x15)

Roland

6320 - Roland CB100 (100W, 1x12)
4433 - Roland CB120XL Cube 120X (120w, 1x12)
4435 - Roland Cube 20XL BASS (20W, 1x8)
4434 - Roland Cube 60XL (60W, 1x10)
5678 - Roland Microcube Bass RX, (5W, 4x4)
4599 - TC Electronic BG500 115 500W, 1x15

Bass Heads

4387 - Ashdown 330, 330W
4398 - Ashdown 427 Small Block 427W
4384 - Ashdown 550, 550W
8706 - Ashdown ABM1000 Lite Evo III
8704 - Ashdown ABM2000 Lite Evo III
6760 - Ashdown ABM500 EVO III 575W
6250 - Ashdown ABM500RC Evo III 575W
6761 - Ashdown ABM900 EVO 3, 575+575W
4399 - Ashdown JJ500 JJ Burnel Sig 575W
5338 - Ashdown BTA400 400W
8707 - Ashdown CTM300 Classic Tube Magnifier
4395 - Ashdown Drophead DP200H 200w Valve
5064 - Ashdown Little Bastard 30, 30W
4875 - Ashdown Little Bastard 30, 30W UK
8708 - Ashdown Little Bastard 550 Head
6455 - Ashdown MAG300H Evo III 300W
9056 - Ashdown Mag300H Evo2 Bass Amp Head
8713 - Ashdown Mag600 Head Evo III Bass Head
8710 - Asdown MiBass 220
7975 - Ashdown MiBass 550 Bass Amp Head
9309 - Ashdown TE12 500H 12 Band Bass Head
9349 - Hartke HA2500 Bass Head
9027 - Hartke Kilo 1000 Bass Head
9280 - Hartke LH500 Bass Guitar Amp Head
10408 - MarkBass Bass MultiAmp Stereo
5675 - Mark Bass Little Mark 250 (250w)
5245 - Mark Bass Little Mark 800, 800W
6243 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head 500w
9035 - Markbass Little Mark Tube Bass Amp Head
5244 - MarkBass Little Mark Tube 800, 800W
5243 - Mark Bass SD1200, 1200W
7962 - Markbass TTE500 Randy Jackson Bass Head
9256 - Markbass Big Bang 500W Bass Head
9250 - Markbass Classic 300 Head
9941 - Markbass Little Mark 250 Head Black
9249 - Markbass L Mark Rocker 500 Bass Amp Head
9255 - Markbass Momark Modular Bass Systems
9944 - Markbass MultiAmp
9725 - Markbass TTE800 Randy Jackson Bass Head
5652 - Marshall MB450H 450W
6618 - Marshall VBA400 Valve 400W
6261 - Orange AD200 MK3
8231 - Orange Dark Terror Valve Guitar Head
5242 - Orange TB1000 1000W Terror
5351 - Orange Terror Bass 500 TB500
5957 - Peavey Pro VB3 300W
5960 - Peavey Tour 450, 450W
5959 - Peavey Tour VB2 225W
5184 - TC Electronic RH450, 450W

Bass Cabinets

8733 - Ashdown 210T Deep Lite Bass Cab
6457 - Ashdown ABM115 Compact (1x15)
6456 - Ashdown ABM410H (4x10)
4376 - Ashdown ABM610 (6x10)
5677 - Ashdown ABM810 (8x10)
4394 - Ashdown CL115 Large (1x15)
4393 - Ashdown CL410H (4x10)
4392 - Ashdown CL414H Plus Horn (4x10)
4391 - Ashdown CL610 Tilt-Cab (6x10)
4390 - Ashdown CL810 (8x10)
6146 - Ashdown NEO115H Compact (1x15)
6452 - Ashdown MAG115 Deep (1x15)
6451 - Ashdown MAG210T Deep (2x10)
8754 - Ashdown MAG414T Deep Lite
8730 - Ashdown Mag 115 Deep Lite Bass Cab
8755 - Ashdown Mag410T Deep 4 x 10 Bass Cab
8756 - Ashdown Mag810T 8 x 10" Bass Cab
9315 - Ashdown Mi10 Bass Cab
9316 - Ashdown Mi12 Bass Cab
8692 - Ashdown VS112 125 1 x 12 Bass Cab
4379 - Ashdown VS115 200 (1x15)
8691 - Ashdown VS212 200 2 x 12 Bass Cab
8711 - Ashdown VS412 600 Bass Extension Cab
9723 - Eden 210 XLT 2 X 10 4Ohm Bass Cab
9007 - Hartke HCH112 Bass Cab
9292 - Hartke HCH410 Hydrive 410 Bass Cab
4766 - Mark Bass NY804 New York 804 (8 x 4)
6241 - Mark Bass STD102HF (2x10)
6242 - Mark Bass STD104HF (4x10)
5476 - Mark Bass STD104HR (4x10)
5477 - Mark Bass STD151HR (1x15)
9033 - Markbass Traveler 121H Bass Ext Cab
9034 - Markbass Traveler 151 P Bass Guitar Cab
4733 - Mark Bass Traveller TRV102P (2x10)
5431 - Mark Bass NY121 New York 1x 12 Bass Cab
10412 - Markbass NY122 2 x 12 Bass Cab
10409 - Markbass NY151 1 x 15 Bass Cab
10410 - Markbass NY151 RJ 1 x 15" Randy Jackson
10411 - Markbass NY604 Bass Cab
6767 - Marshall VBC412 (4x12)
6617 - Marshall VBC810 (8x10)
6259 - Orange OBC115 (1x15)
10266 - Orange OBC210 Bass Guitar Speaker Cab
6260 - Orange OBC410H (4x10)
5241 - Orange OBC810 (8x10)
5239 - Orange SP212 Smart Power Isobaric (2x12)
5238 - Orange SP410 Smart Power Isobaric (4x10)
6766 - Peavey 410TVX (4x10)
5182 - TC Electronic RS210 (2x10)
5181 - TC Electronic RS212 (2x12)
5180 - TC Electronic RS410 (4x10)

For full guitar details, pricing and photos, enter the number next to each guitar model into our SKU search facility on the website.

PEAVEY MAX SERIES

Bass combos

Duff Battye minds his PVs and Qs with this handy range of affordable combos

The US manufacturer Peavey will be familiar to most playing musicians and although the brand may not have the draw in the UK of, say, Ampeg or Ashdown for bass amplification, they do produce some high-quality gear. While they tend to be viewed as a "rock" brand, with bassists from Chickenfoot, Black Stone Cherry and Asking Alexandria as endorsers, they also cater for the likes of Duran Duran's John Taylor. Peavey have just tweaked and relaunched their bass combos under the MAX branding. The five units range from the 10w MAX126 to the 300w MAX115. On test here we have these MAX115, the 100w MAX110 and the 20w MAX158. The range is completed by the 200w MAX112.

BUILD QUALITY

As you would expect from a manufacturer the size of Peavey, the three combos on test are solidly put together. They're plain black, bar a discreet Peavey branding on the front of the cabinets. Weight-wise, they're what you would expect for this size and budget – the 20w practice amp can be easily carried in one hand, whereas the 300w model requires some grunt to shift.

For combos this size it always makes sense to have the controls and inputs on the top of the cabinet, so they are easily accessible whether the player is standing or sitting down. The two bigger models have this feature, but unfortunately the 20w MAX158 has its control panel at the front of the amp. I'm sure this is to do with the limitations of design options with a cab this size, but it is rather frustrating. From a seated position, you can't see the controls or tuner clearly: I ended up tilting the combo back against a chair.

One fantastic feature across all three combos is an integrated tuner with a mute button. Many players will have their own tuner options in the live situation, but for practising both at home or in the studio, this function is a great addition. Simply plugging in and tuning is a much more hassle-free event without having to use multiple leads and power sources for a standalone tuner. The tuner itself is easy to use, utilising a three-light system for flat, sharp or in tune.

The controls themselves are clearly marked and the knobs and inputs robust and easy to use on all the models. All the amps come with both a UK and European plug.

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

Bass purists often prefer separate amps and speaker set-ups: obviously these give you more options, but these can be offset by

Technical Specification

MAX 110
Price £239
Power 100 watts
Speaker | 10-inch premium Peavey speaker, DDT speaker protection
Controls | Pre-gain control with TransTube gain boost, three-band EQ with Mid-Shift, Psycho-acoustic low-end enhancement, chromatic tuner with mute
Inputs | 1/8" aux input
Outputs | 1/8" headphones output

BGM Rating

BUILD QUALITY ★★★★★★★★☆☆
SOUND QUALITY ★★★★★★☆☆☆☆
VALUE ★★★★★★☆☆☆☆

a higher pricetag. However, combos have their place – both in a practice situation and live.

We've noted the aforementioned issues with the frontal controls of the 20w MAX158, which features input, volume, three tonal controls, the built-in tuner and inputs for aux and headphones. In common with the entire range, the combo also boasts two Peavey-patented feature buttons – the TT Boost and the Psycho-Acoustic Technology. The latter function is an interesting option: billed as low end enhancement, it does seem to give the tone a warmer, more rounded quality. It's not that noticeable on the MAX158, but does add a nice option on the bigger models.

Technical Specification

MAX 115
Price | £309
Power | 300 watts
Speaker | 15" premium Peavey speaker with high-end tweeter, DDT speaker protection
Controls | Pre-gain control with TransTube gain boost, three-band EQ with Punch, Mid-Shift and Bright controls, Psycho-acoustic low-end enhancement, chromatic tuner with mute
Inputs | 1/8" aux input
Outputs | 1/8" headphones output, built-in direct output with ground lift

BGM Rating

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★★★★☆☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★★★★★☆☆
VALUE	★★★★★★★★☆☆

As with most small combos, the 8" speaker is clear to a point, but towards the top end of volume it starts to lose some clarity. This is not a huge issue, as you would generally only use an amp like this where volume isn't paramount: however the 8" speaker does seem to make the two additional features slightly redundant.

The TT (TransTube) distortion boost option tends to lose clarity on the MAX158, and the gain seems to drop the overall output – but again, would you expect an integrated gain on a small portable combo to be much good? Probably not. However, this function improves dramatically when you step up to the bigger MAX110 and MAX115. Both the 10" and 15" speaker make the TT a useful addition in terms of different sounds, but for a real recordable or live boost/gain, you'd still need to look for additional pedals or effects.

The MAX110 has all the features of its smaller sibling with an additional gain control and separate inputs for active and passive basses. Also, rather niftily, it has a cutaway at the bottom back of the combo so the whole unit can be tilted. The separate gain and bigger 10" speaker take the bedroom-only capabilities of the MAX158 and push them to a unit that could be easily used for rehearsals or smaller live gigs. The tonal options are wider and it gives your bass a rounded, bright tone.

The MAX115 is a further step up with a serious 300w output through its 15" speaker – this amp is definitely stepping out of bedroom territory. I'm always of the opinion that a 15" speaker is what you need for combos if you want to use them in a gigging situation. Control wise, the 115 is the same as the MAX110 but with an added direct out and ground lift button. The bigger speaker seems to elevate the sound when playing – it really does give a lovely full-bodied, rounded tone given that this is a £300-odd amp.

Technical Specification

MAX158
Price | £109
Power | 20 watts
Speaker | 8" premium Peavey speaker
Controls | Low, Mid and High EQ, Volume, TransTube overdrive boost, Psycho-acoustic low-end enhancement, chromatic tuner with mute
Inputs | 1/8" input
Outputs | 1/8" headphone output

BGM Rating

BUILD QUALITY	★★★★★★☆☆☆☆
SOUND QUALITY	★★★★☆☆☆☆☆☆
VALUE	★★★★☆☆☆☆☆☆

CONCLUSION

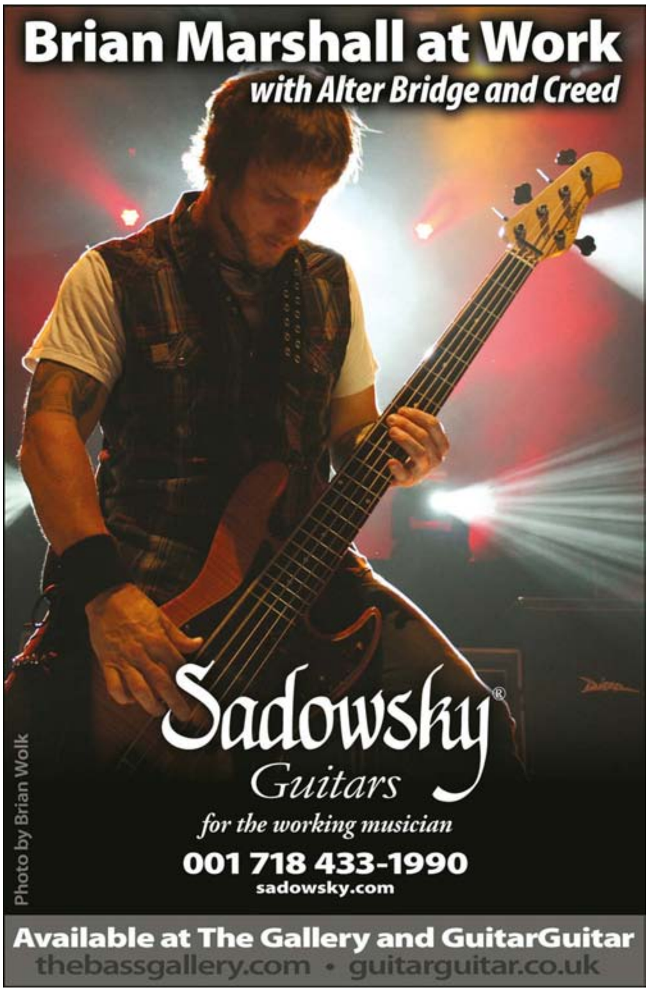
The 20w MAX158 was really quite hard to get on with, from the controls to the largely redundant extra sound buttons. For this kind of bedroom amp there are, quite frankly, better and cheaper options. But as the combo size increases, so the MAX series comes into its own. The MAX110 is perfectly adequate, but for an extra £70 the MAX115 offers much better value for money. The 15" speaker of the biggest model seems to give so many more options, sound and setting wise. It could be used on large stages as part of a full band set-up, but also happily sit in the corner of a bedroom for tuner-integrated, hassle-free practice. ■

What We Think

PLUS | Competitively priced; good build quality and integrated components; built-in tuner
MINUS | Lacks the "wow" factor of other amps; frontal controls on the MAX158
OVERALL | If you want a good value combo with a range of wattage options, the MAX series should be considered – particularly the MAX115 which offers wide tonal options, serious clout and a reasonable price tag

A NEW DIMENSION
Facebook.com/fendergbi
Twitter.com/fendergbi
ALL-NEW MODERN DESIGN FROM THE FIRST NAME IN BASS.
© 2013 FMIC. FENDER®, DIMENSION™ AND THE DISTINCTIVE HEADSTOCK DESIGNS COMMONLY FOUND ON THESE GUITARS ARE TRADEMARKS OF FENDER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS CORPORATION. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
fender.com/dimension-bass
THE DIMENSION™ BASS
THE PINNACLE OF PRO-LEVEL BASS STYLE, POWER, PERFORMANCE AND PERSONALITY.
Fender

Musicguard
insuring the UK's musicians
Because maybe, we're gonna be the one that saves you.
Musicguard provides insurance in case things go wrong including accidental damage, theft, loss and public liability.
Call now on 0844 826 2295 (quoting 202021)
or visit www.musicguard.co.uk
THISTLE INSURANCE SERVICES
Musicguard is a trading style of Thistle Insurance Services Limited. Lloyd's Broker. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. A JLT Group Company. Registered office: The St Botolph Building, 138 Houndsditch, London, EC3A 7AW. Registered in England No 00338645, VAT No. 244 2321 96.


Brian Marshall at Work
with Alter Bridge and Creed
Sadowsky®
Guitars
for the working musician
001 718 433-1990
sadowsky.com
Photo by Brian Wolk
Available at The Gallery and GuitarGuitar
thebassgallery.com • guitarguitar.co.uk

STAY CONNECTED TO THE LOW END
ON SOCIAL NETWORKS
Twitter
@BassGuitarMag
facebook.com/
bassguitarmagazine
AND VIA OUR NEW WEBSITE
www.bassguitarmagazine.com
Bass Guitar Magazine
NOVEMBER ISSUE AVAILABLE TO BUY NOW

FBG
P/J Vintage Soul Pickups
Contemporary Design with Vintage Inspiration
Bass Guitar Magazine RATING
BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE
"THERE IS A LOVELY ROUNDED FEEL TO THE TONE THAT NEVER LOSES DEFINITION"
BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE
web: www.fatboyguitars.co.uk phone: 07938699273 email: fatboyguitars@btinternet.com
Dealers: UK - Bass Gear Distribution / Europe - crazyparts

www.skjolddesign.com
SKJOLD DESIGN GUITARS
https://www.facebook.com/#!/SkjoldDesignGuitars
YouTube
http://www.youtube.com/user/SkjoldVideos

THE WOODSHED

Enfield CEO Martin Sims opens his doors to *BGM* and reveals the philosophy behind his bass-making approach

Martin Sims is a man with more experience than most of the bass world, having spent the last 20 years making his name as a builder of bass guitars, retrofitted accessories and pickups, the latest of these being his line of Enfield Lionheart basses and the innovative Super Quad pickup system. A man with much to offer the *BGM* cause, you'll agree.

A bassist and fan of cool bass playing as much as the engineering behind the gear, he tells us: "I started playing bass after hearing Pino Palladino on Paul Young's cover of 'Wherever I Lay My Hat'. The bass stood out as the most creative of instruments, and just seemed to resonate with me on a level I could understand and get excited about. After that I seemed to always pick out the bass-lines in the stuff I was listening to, so it wasn't long before I had to get my very own bass: a second-hand Westone four-string with an unnamed amp, which I bought because it had a 15" speaker – and I thought that was cool." We've all been there…

Asked about his approach to bass design, Martin explains: "Bass building for me isn't about smoke and mirrors: it's about engineering. Things happen – or don't – for a reason, and I believe this is why an instrument sounds the way it does. When it comes to design I believe that function should dominate and help form the way things look. As for building, we use a composite approach of traditional building philosophies and modern technology to bring them about in a consistent and reliable manner. I see nothing wrong in using technology where the results are better than the old ways, so our bodies and necks are made with a mix of traditional handcrafting and modern-day technologies helping where they can."

Looking back at the highs and lows of his career, Martin continues: "When I started the company in 1994 I was pretty much on my own. The LEDs that I started manufacturing for bass guitars were a new service that was only available at the time from a couple of companies: Alembic and Status spring to mind. The concept I was bringing though was the 'retro-fit' aspect of it all, allowing anyone with any guitar or bass to get the LED experience with their own instrument. This required a great deal of work, as new products or services in this industry are not always taken up that quickly. Our industry was – and still is, to a certain extent – a conservative marketplace, and changes need to be sanctioned by the big players. When they accept what you are offering and show this on stage, then you see doors opening and other people willing to take on the idea themselves.

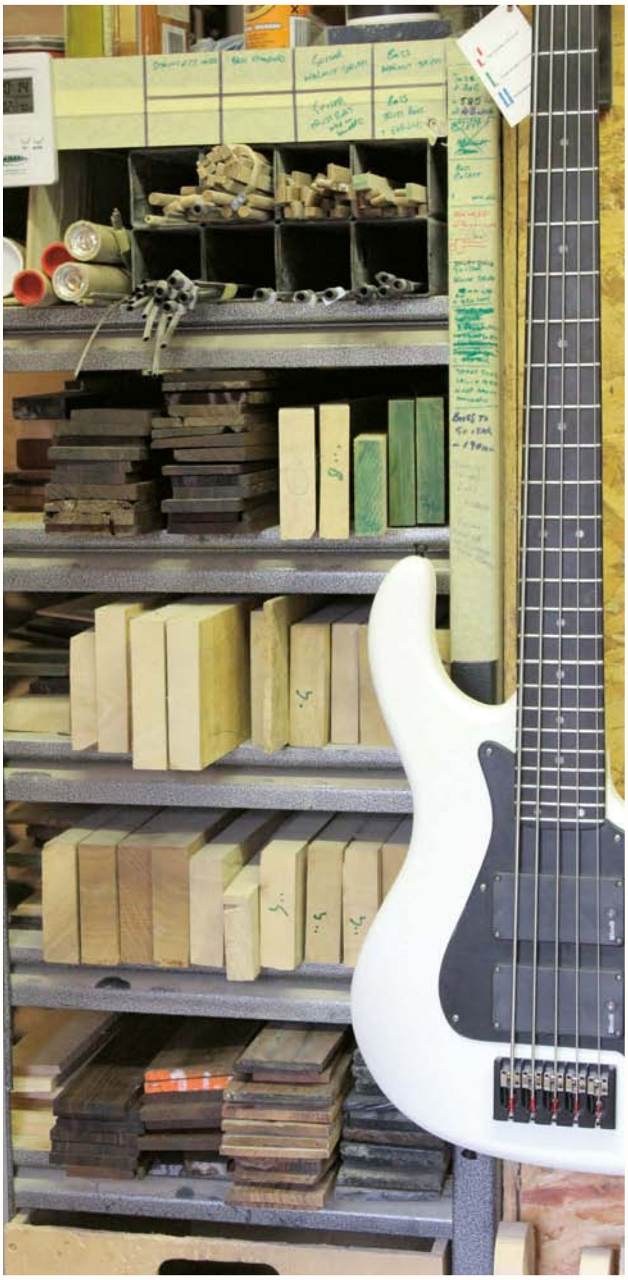
"A high point, I would say, was seeing Stuart Zender of Jamiroquai on stage at Wembley in 1996, having the whole stage all to himself with his LEDs shining out to 10,000 people all going mad. That was simply euphoric! It was the same with Billy Sheehan, John Paul Jones, Mark King and so many other great bass icons who believed in what I was doing and added their support and approval by standing there, lights ablaze – no pun intended – and lapping it all up from the audience."

For those who haven't had a chance to sample Martin's Super Quad pickup system, he gives us a sneak preview. "These are similar in concept to our Super 8 pickup, he says, "but they are now in two separate casings, made from carbon-fibre impregnated black nylon for shielding purposes. They now have their own integrally mounted tricolour LED – can you see there's a theme here? – in the pickup casing itself. The great John East has worked his magic again by reducing the overall size of the Tri-Logic switching system, so we can now offer our Super Quads as a full-on retrofit package. Anyone can now get the multipickup experience themselves in their very own bass."

So of the basses that Martin has made over the years, which one has been his favourite? "This one is easy," he chuckles. "It has to be our Enfield range, which I started in earnest around the mid-Noughties when I dreamt up the Super 8 pickup concept. I was over at Pete 'The Fish' Stevens' place, and I spoke to him about whether it would be doable to split a pickup both horizontally and vertically. Pete gave me some of his Wal pickup parts and explained his philosophy on getting a good bass pickup sound."

He goes on: "I went away and worked on my concept over the next year or so. There were so many obstacles to overcome, and at many points I just thought it wasn't possible, I went to see Kent Armstrong with various questions that wouldn't give the

Rob Fleet, production manager



game away, and was told that my idea wouldn't work because of the many phasing issues that would crop up. Kent is a very knowledgeable man, and was right to a degree – but I'm like a dog with a bone sometimes, and I just couldn't let it go. In the end I contacted John East, with whom I had spent many a hour talking things over at various music shows in Frankfurt, Anaheim and elsewhere, and he said he would take a look at the problem. After a few more hurdles he got the switching side of things sorted, which was when I thought that maybe there was something here with this.

"Pete Stevens had always said to me that the pickup was the heart of any electric bass, and the great Trev Wilkinson also instilled in me that when bringing anything new to the market you need to answer a couple of simple questions. Why is it here? What's different about it? What is it offering that other products don't offer? For what reason have you brought this thing to market? The Super 8 was the answer to all these questions. After this I went away and put everything I could into the development of the Super 8, and of course our very own bass guitar to put it into."

Martin's goals for the future are clear, he tells us. "We want to move forward with our Enfield bass range. We make the Enfields on a very small production line here at our UK workshop: everything is built here, and our goal is to keep everything here. With the introduction of the Lionheart range, we are now able to offer a fully handmade British bass that starts at £1,650 including VAT. That's a first for us – and let me tell you, it's not easy to make basses of this quality and at this price point by hand. We are a small, committed group of people in the UK, all players, and all as committed towards the company's future success as I am."

Talking of bassists, who is Martin's personal bass hero? "Man, there's only one for me!" he says. "The man of all men when it comes to all things music – although he happens to play bass as well! – is Mr Roger Waters. This is a guy who is the writer of the world's most emotive, sublime and in my opinion greatest bands ever. He is also the most underrated bassist for some reason, if you take his vast achievements into account." ■

More info: www.enfieldguitars.com.

The FrontLine

Want to know how to survive the bass world? Listen up – *BGM's* four-bassist team of professionals has some advice for you…

The Jazz Bassist

RUTH GOLLER

Hep cat Ruth suggests some swinging improv exercises

I was 20 years old when I started playing the bass, and I was very lucky to have an amazing teacher at that time. His name is Nico Gomez and he is an incredible electric bass player. I often wonder how a different teacher at such a fragile time of learning and discovery would have shaped me as a musician. Nico's approach to teaching was very clear and organised, and every exercise he taught me had a clear goal, while always being creative. I still think like this when I practise, and I frequently work on many things that he showed me back then. The Continuos Scale Exercise is one of these exercises that I highly rate and keep developing in different directions. You find a scale that fits harmonically over a chord progression of your choice, for example the C major scale fits over Dmin, G7, Cmaj and Amin. Start in the form of a walking bass-line, where you have four notes in a bar, and then choose a longer chord progression which moves through different key centres. Make sure to play from the lowest to the highest note possible, which will help to get to know your neck really well. I find this exercise very useful because it helps me to hear longer melodic phrases and not just one-bar triads, outlining each chord. When playing over chord progressions you can start to think in boxes very quickly, meaning that you'll hear each chord separately from the next. This exercise helps me to make my bass-lines sound like strong melodies on their own. Taking this exercise further, I have started practising improvisation within the same context. For example, I might limit myself to only playing linear phrases – either up or down – and avoid intervals bigger than a whole tone, while thinking of which scale fits to my chord progression. In addition I make myself start and end my phrases in different points within the bar, in order to start hearing new lines that would not feel very obvious to me – perhaps on beat two instead of beat one. It is also very important to define the points of harmonic resolution and tension in the chord progression, as it will help to create a strong melodic line. There are many different ways to improvise over chord changes, but this exercise has helped me achieve a little more freedom when playing over changes.

soundcloud.com/ruth-goller

The Metalhead

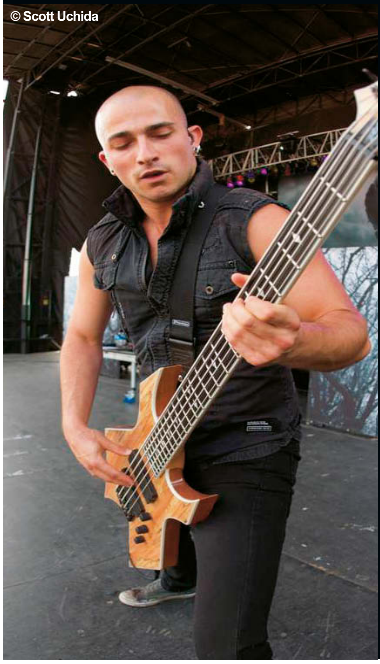
PAOLO GREGOLETTO

Trivium's bassist reveals his new gear

After road-testing my new Kemper Profiler, I felt it was time to weigh in on this high-tech piece of gear. Spoiler alert: it rocks! Sure, it's definitely still a guitar player's world in terms of the number of profiles available and ready to download. However, the Ampeg 450 head and cab that I found was dead-on for what I needed for my main tone. What is really incredible is how much you can alter these amps within the Kemper. Serious voodoo magic.

I've also been able to make different patches for extra bass sounds I need. For cleaner parts in our songs I rolled off a bit of the presence and top end, giving me a little less of the clang I like in the main tone. On solo sections I'm actually using a 6505 Peavey guitar head and amp! By the way, the low end is immense on these things. Anyone that has issues with digitals sounding 'too digital' are going to love this thing. The way my sound guy has described my tone is that it's almost three-dimensional, and I have had many compliments about how tight the low end is in the mix. Are they roadworthy? Well, having already been on a ton of flights and miles of criss-crossing the US with these Kempers for over a month, we have had minimal issues. The only real problem we had was when we first showed up to a festival this past August and one of the Kempers failed to load. We ended up finding out that one of the chips inside had come loose from the first two flights we made. On the tech support side, the Kemper dudes have been on top of any issues and questions that we have had. From a touring band's perspective these things, as the Axe FX have been, are a game changer. To be able to play a show on one side of the world and fly to another gig thousands of miles away with the same piece of gear is not only great for consistent tones, but saves so much money in shipping or rentals. To be able to take studio amp tones out on tour has made us much tighter and better-sounding then ever before. My biggest fear as a bassist was not getting the warmth that I wanted, and this delivers in clarity and quality of low end. Hell, I have heard staunch amp enthusiasts even give it up for these things. They are no joke!

www.trivium.org

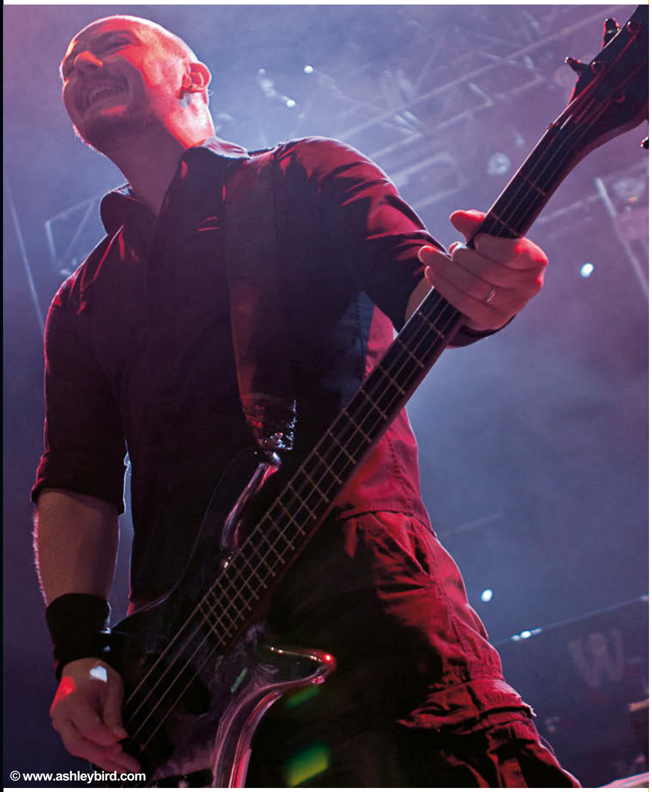


© Scott Uchida

The Alternative Rocker

MICHAEL MCKEEGAN

Therapy? bassist Mike hails the guy behind the kit



© www.ashleybird.com

People often ask what is the most invaluable tool any bass player can have. Stuck on a desert island with only a P-Bass and a 4x10 combo, what would be the sole item that would help your time in solitude go better? A big bag of plectrums? A tuner? A fully stocked bar? Or dare I say it… a drummer? The reason this came to mind was that I've been working on some demos at home, and the least inspiring part of the process has been working out something rhythmic to jam along to. Our bandmates and I live miles apart so regular jamming is not possible: DAWs and Dropbox are required to get the ideas detailed and circulated. More often than not, I just want to get a good idea down: nothing fancy, just the chords and root notes as it all changes quite radically when we work them up with the band. These are the times when one hankers for a rehearsal room and a drummer to flesh out the tunes, simply just to humanise the process. Not necessarily an amazing drummer either: in these instances any drummer would be a great boost, regardless of ability. Sometimes musical ideas in the past have been consigned to the 'no thanks' pile purely because the actual song demo never had any life to them. I know the best ideas I respond to as a bassist seem to be the ones done simply and effectively – just voice and guitar. It's amazing how a beating human heart can add such feel and dynamic to even the most generic of bass-lines. Drop a few root notes on the top of the bars and you'll see how alive the songs become. Even if the drummer is struggling, you'll soon find a way to help each other get the ideas out there. As clichéd as it sounds, playing with a drummer will tighten up and develop your bass playing no end. I've been very lucky in that I've played with quite a few killer drummers, and as a bassist it's been very flattering to my playing.
www.therapyquestionmark.co.uk

The Extended-Range Specialist

STEWART MCKINSEY

ERB madman Stu sets you some homework

I would like to give you a challenge. In this column I have discussed technique, musicians and the abstract elements of what we do – but in the end everything I present here comes back to music, and making music. So I'd like to suggest you take some of what I've shared here to do just that. Write something: something that is yours and which reflects you, both as a player and as a person. I'm not demanding that you compose your magnum opus – although that would be quite the challenge. Instead, create something that may only be for you. Maybe it will come from an exercise you've created, or perhaps it will grow from a melodic motif or rhythmic figure that's been floating around in your brain. It could be the result of you trying to tie some things together in terms of theory, or maybe some technical aspect of playing. However you do it, devote some time and effort into something musical. Don't base it on anything you've heard someone else do. Don't judge it or compare it to what anyone else has done. Don't worry if it's simple or complex, long or short. Don't dwell on crafting something perfect to perform. Just make some music. If you are a soloist, it's mandatory. If you're a technician whose goal is honing the craft of playing, remember that songwriting is a craft, too, and that understanding it from the inside will open you as a player. Let the inspiration come from anywhere, not necessarily from bass. It can be anything; a work of art, a child's smile, a phone call from a friend, a story in the news, the sound of a train before you see it... Anything. As you are part of an elite group, a tiny pocket in the musical community, make something for you, something that is just yours. Why not? Who knows where it may lead.
www.facebook.com/pages/Stew-McKinsey/12018239044

Bass Guitar Magazine

DIGITAL EDITIONS

AVAILABLE ON iPAD, iPHONE AND ANDROID

VISIT pocketmags.com

Available on the iPhone App Store

BASS TECHNIQUES

Making you a better bass player

Welcome to our redesigned techniques section, in which *Bass Guitar Magazine* collates the wit and wisdom of the *crème de la crème* of the electric and upright bass world. We're fortunate enough to have some serious talent on the team, from world-class music educators to experienced touring musicians, who between them have laid down the low notes in every studio, club and arena in the civilised world. Note that we've divided the columns according to **Beginner**, **Intermediate** and **Advanced** level for easy reference. Whether you're looking to improve your playing technique, expand your awareness of theory, set up your rig to sound like your particular bass hero or simply get on a bus and tour, we provide the answers you need here. What are you waiting for? Dive in...

Joel McIver, editor

Jack Stevens graduated from the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts in 2005 and has gone on to play bass with the likes of Craig David, Simon Webbe and Mick Hucknall. He is currently working with Chris McDonald and Shane Beales.
www.jackstevensbass.com

JACK STEVENS BEGINNER'S THEORY P72

Paul Geary attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston and the Musicians' Institute of Technology. He has played with artists including George Michael and Westlife. He also heads up the Academy Of Contemporary Music's bass school.
www.paulgeary.com

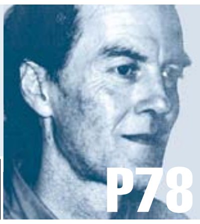
PAUL GEARY BEGINNER'S TECHNIQUES P74

Alex Webster has long been acknowledged as one of the heavy metal world's most advanced bass players, having founded the frankly terrifying Cannibal Corpse in 1988 and guesting since then on musically complex projects such as Blotted Science. He is the author of the Extreme Metal Bass instruction book.

ALEX WEBSTER INTERMEDIATE THEORY P76

Rob Statham has amassed over 25 years as a professional freelance bass player. He has played in a wide range of musical settings, including jazz, blues, prog and classical, and he has taught for the past three years at Tech Music School.

ROB STATHAM INTERMEDIATE TECHNIQUES P78



Head of the Bass Department at BIMM Brighton, Franc has worked with artists such as Steve Howe (Yes), Lisa Moorish, and Mike Lindup (Level 42). Franc uses Jeff Chapman basses and Elites strings.
www.francoshea.com

FRANC O'SHEA ADVANCED THEORY P82

Dave Marks's playing and recording credits span a wide range of bands and artists. His time is spread between the Rick Parfitt Jnr band, his 'RhythmMatters' masterclasses and *Thriller Live* at the West End.
www.davebasslessons.com

DAVE MARKS ADVANCED TECHNIQUES P84

David Etheridge studied double bass at the Royal College of Music. Since then he's worked with musicians as diverse as Nigel Kennedy and Martin Taylor. David teaches double and electric bass and is the MD of two big bands and a 55-piece jazz orchestra.

DAVID ETHERIDGE UPRIGHT BASS P86

Kev Sanders is a freelance electric and double bassist who has gigged and recorded with many artists. As well as numerous BBC radio and television sessions, he's played over 4,000 live gigs. He is the head of Bass Studies at AMS.
www.kevsanders.com

KEVIN SANDERS SOUND LIKE YOUR HEROES P88

BEGINNING BASS

View digital content here

JACK STEVENS

Jack Stevens continues his exploration of scales for beginners, giving insight into the major and minor keys

While these columns are aimed at the beginner bass player, or those looking to brush up on the fundamentals of music theory, the study of musical principles needn't be a linear process. We've concentrated on one-octave major and minor scales in the past, but I want to demonstrate how these scales extend when we venture into the octave above.

There are myriad theory basics that we have yet to explore, but one important concept, major modes, is a lot easier to explain if we have a better grasp of our fingerboard knowledge. Hopefully, this month's exercises will improve your manoeuvrability around the bass neck. It will certainly give you the ability to stay within a major or minor key, playing across all the strings of a four-string bass. If you're familiar with standard notation, try and avoid looking at the tablature straight away for suggested note placement. The 'tab' should really be used as a prompt rather than being relied upon. In this instance, however, I'm asking you to play a specific fingerboard pattern, so don't avoid it completely.

Figure one is our basic one-octave G major scale. Pay attention to the key signature: we've got one #, which is an F sharp. Looking back to last month's column, what is the relative minor key signature of G major?

Figure two is the same scale, but it extends up to the 11th degree above the root note, the low G. Try playing up and down this longer scale. You now have 11 notes under your fingers without moving your hand position. Notice how the top two string fingerings are the same: index, ring finger, pinkie.

Figure three is a one-octave G minor scale. We've got two ♭s, which means that G minor is the relative minor of B flat major. What's the rule for finding a relative key signature?

Extending the G minor scale is slightly trickier from a left-hand fingering perspective. You have two options: either utilise a small position shift, as shown in figure four, or try increasing your hand span and covering five frets (figure five). The latter option is worth trying, even just once, as in the long run we should be aiming to make this stretch every now and again; it makes a full two-octave major scale less fiddly too.

Right, so by now the sound of the major and 'natural' minor scales should be pretty familiar to you. For the final exercise this month, I'd like you to find your own fingerings for completing the two-octave major and minor scales (figures six and seven). Of course, you could cheat and look up a suggested pattern online, but try and be disciplined and follow your ear and your common sense (cue drummer-related joke). We want as few shifts as possible and for it to feel natural. Try to avoid too much string noise and uncomfortable stretching. Next month I will show you some suggested patterns. ■

Figure 1

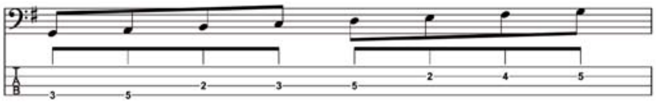


Figure 2

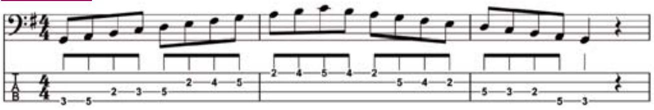


Figure 3

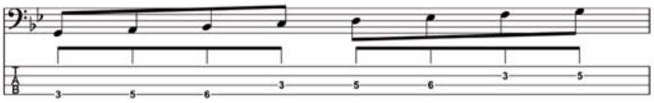


Figure 4

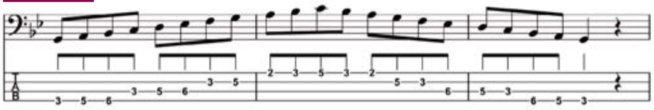


Figure 5

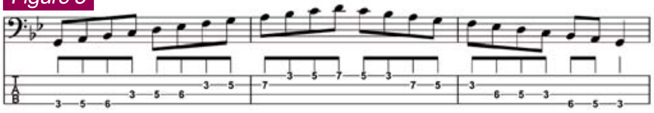


Figure 6

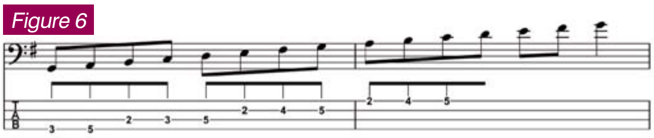
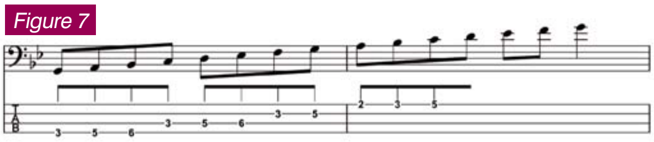


Figure 7



Elixir® Strings for Bass:
An All New Playing Experience.
Elixir® strings
GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE · LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2013 W. L. Gore & Associates, (UK) Limited

Mark bass

www.markbass.it

NEW Bass Sounds for 2013

MINIMARK 802

Warm, focused Markbass sound from 2 custom 8" drivers and a piezo horn in a compact package. Ideal for smaller gigs, recording, rehearsals and practice with an aux in and headphone out. Suitable for either Electric, Acoustic or Upright bass.

BASS MULTIAMP

The all-in-one dedicated solution for gigging and recording bassists. Virtual vintage and modern preamps, stomp boxes, speaker cabs and studio microphones in one easy-to-use, compact, light-weight, rack-mountable box complete with internal power amp.

CMD JB PLAYERS SCHOOL

Jeff Berlin Players School signature combo. Professional quality sound from a more affordable 150W package. Ideal for smaller gigs and rehearsals, the 15" speaker gives great depth and tone with 4- and 5-string basses.

LITTLE MARK 250 BLACK LINE

Compact 250W solid state analogue preamp. A smart, affordable choice for those who don't need the full power of a 500W head, but do want the Markbass sound quality.
Perfect for rehearsals and smaller gigs.

Distributed in the UK and Ireland by
MSL Professional
+44 (0) 207 118 0133
sales@mslpro.co.uk

Find out more at: www.markbass.it

MARK WORLD · Mark bass · DV MARK · MoMark · MARK AUDIO

ACM www.acm.ac.uk
tc electronic
rock-wire

PG'S TIPS

PAUL GEARY

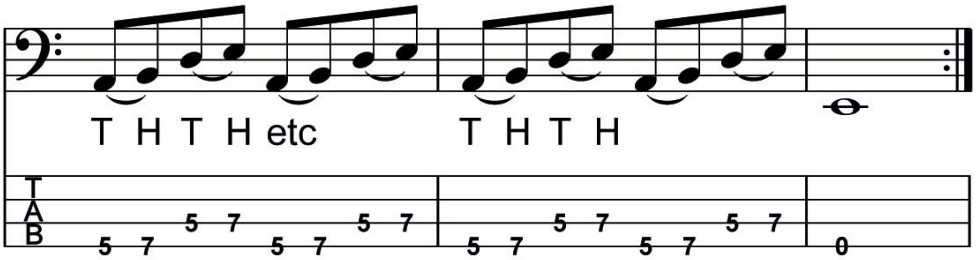
Paul Geary says 'Stop – Hammer-on time!' Are your fretting fingers funky enough?

This month, let's take a look at the hammer-on. One of these can be played on any note. It involves striking a string once with the plucking hand and immediately 'hammering' (pressing down) on the next note on the same string with another finger of the fretting hand, while the string is still vibrating.

To get this sounding just right, work on your fretting hand fingers. It will take quite a bit of strength to hammer the string down and get a clean-sounding note. It's important not to play the string with your picking hand. Develop this to the point where you don't have to think too much about playing it: it will then become a motor skill and an essential part of your tool kit.

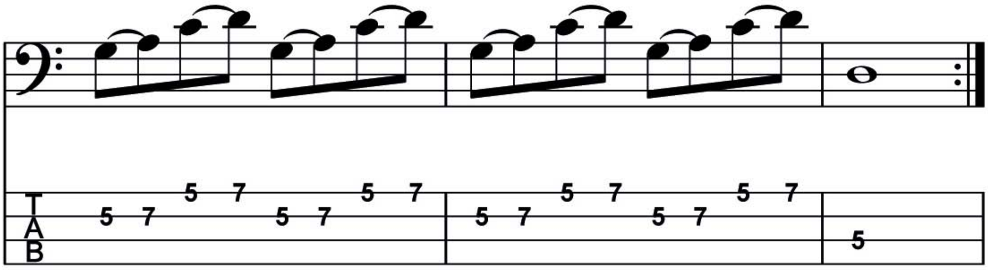
EXAMPLE1

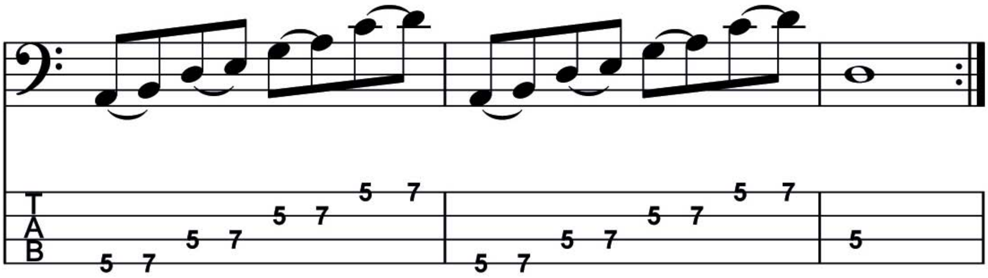
Start on the fifth fret of the E string on the A note. Strike the string with the thumb of your plucking hand to get an A, and then with your fretting hand hammer down on to the B note (seventh fret E string) with your third or fourth fingers. Repeat this process on the fifth fret of the A string playing a D note and then hammering on E (seventh fret A string).



EXAMPLES 2 AND 3

Try doing the same as the last example with the D string at the fifth fret, on the G note up to A (seventh fret D string) and then onto the G string fifth fret C note up to D (seventh fret G string) You will notice that it is harder to get the notes to ring out on these higher strings. Just remember to be consistent with exactly where you thumb the string with the picking hand. This is the secret to getting a clean, fat-sounding note. It is vital that the first note is played strongly, as this in turn sets up the hammer-on. Example three is a mixture of the previous two examples.

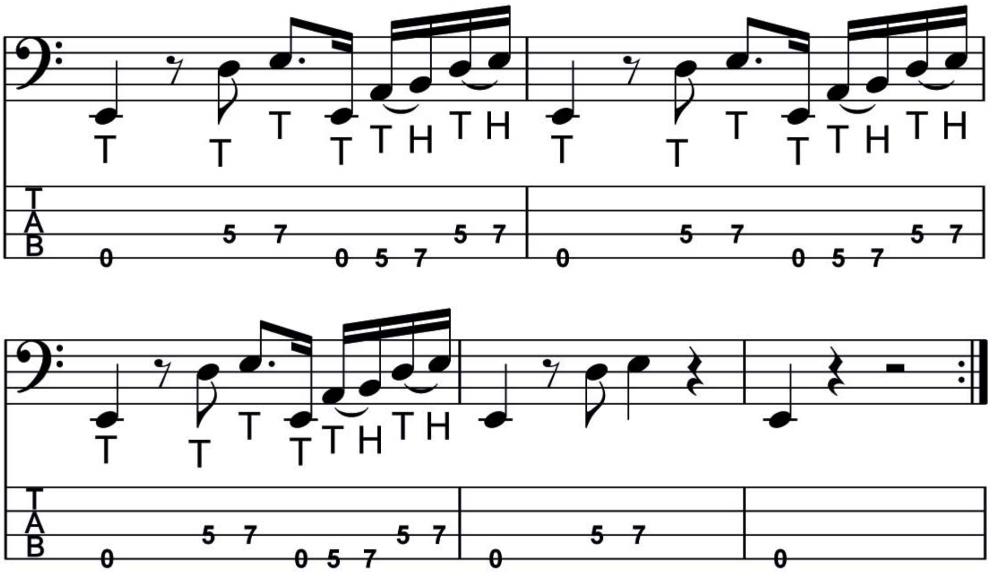




Extending your tone life

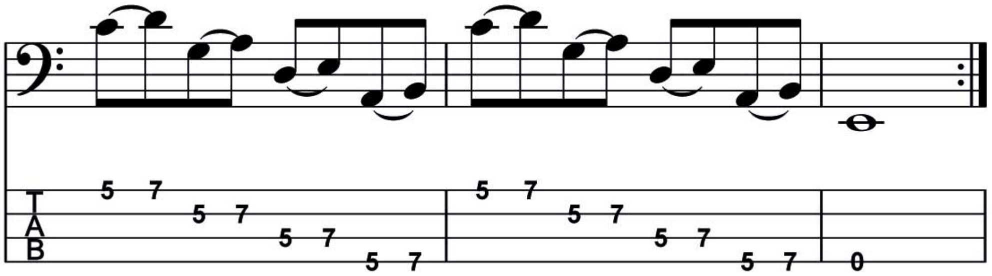
EXAMPLE 4

This example is based on the intro and verse groove to 'Play That Funky Music' by Wild Cherry. Watch out for the dotted eighth note midway through the bar. The dot represents a sixteenth note in time, so you have to hold this note for a little longer. Try to slow this one right down. When it comes to the hammer-on, fill in the last group of sixteenth notes. It is important not to rush the fill: get it to flow into the repeat.



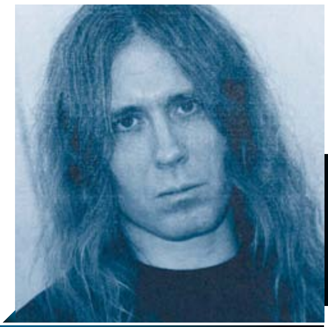
EXAMPLE 5

This last example is a little tricky, as you have to play the first hammer-on at the fifth fret of the G string (C note) and work backwards finishing up on the E string. Give it the same treatment as the earlier examples, making sure it is played in time with good feel, good tone and consistency of groove.



Next month we will look at some hammer-on fills – until then, enjoy spanking that bass!

View digital content here



ALEX WEBSTER

WEBSTER'S BASS DICTIONARY

Alex Webster checks in to advise you on intermediate theory. In his debut column, Alex stacks some thirds, daddio…

Hello and welcome to my first column for *Bass Guitar Magazine*. In this column I'm going to show you some of the things I've learned about music theory over the years, focusing specifically on the things I feel most directly apply to the bass guitar. I hope you'll find these concepts and exercises as interesting and useful as I have.

To get things started I decided we should take a look at scales and how arpeggios and chords can be built from them. I'm going to use the A natural minor scale throughout all of the examples, but keep in mind that the concepts shown could be applied to most of the common seven note scales and their modes.

Examples one and *two* show two different fingerings for a two octave A natural minor scale. In *example one* there is only one position shift, in the second and third bars, where you'll shift up to get the last three notes of the scale and shift down again once descending.

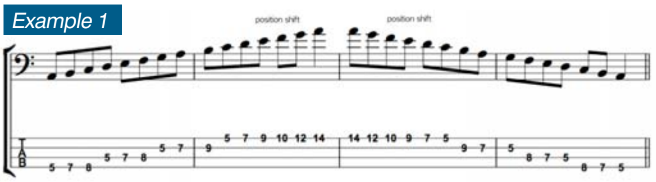
> "THE CONCEPTS SHOWN COULD BE APPLIED TO MOST OF THE COMMON SEVEN NOTE SCALES AND THEIR MODES"

Example two shows a pattern with more but smaller shifts: each shift is achieved by moving the finger that played the last note before the shift up to the next note (or down when descending), rather than moving your entire hand as is necessary for the shift in *example one*. Ascending the scale, the shifting finger will be your pinky, descending it will be your index finger. Note: you'll want to use a fingering similar to *example two's* for most of these examples, diverging where it makes sense.

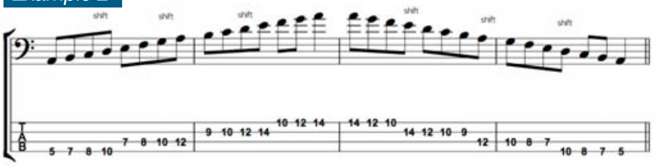
Example three is where we'll begin the chord building process by having you ascend and descend the scale in thirds. Many common chords are built by 'stacking' thirds, as you will see. *Example four* takes you up and down two octaves of the scale, playing an arpeggio for the appropriate triad of each degree of the scale.

For the next few instalments of this column we'll look at various patterns and arpeggios within the A natural minor scale, keeping in mind that these ideas can be applied to most any other scale or mode. Next month, we'll continue to focus on arpeggios and chords by getting into higher extensions. Until then, practise hard and have fun! ■

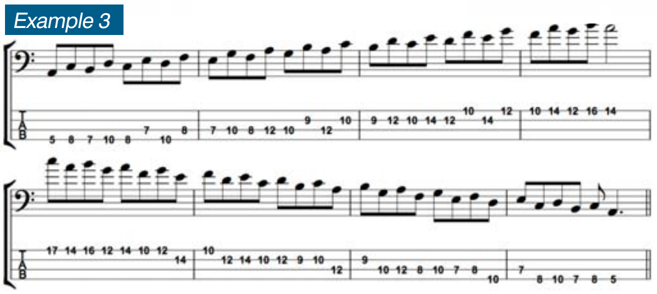
Example 1



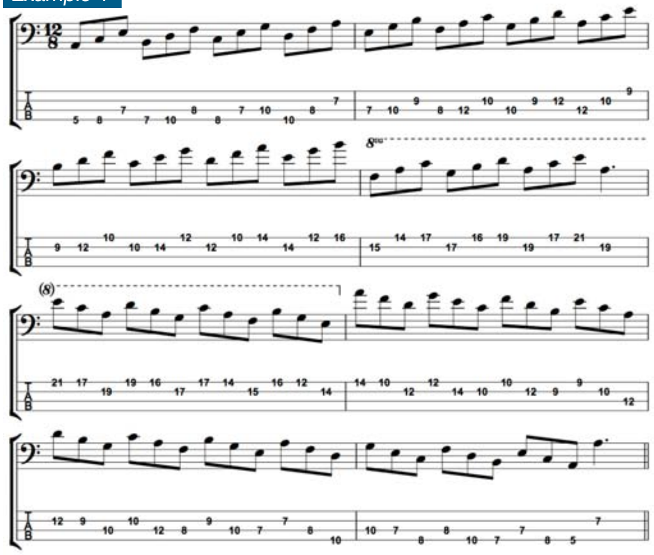
Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



LWA 1000

PURE POWER

1000 WATTS

1000 WATTS 4 OHM 500 WATTS 8 OHM
WEIGHT 5.95 LBS
SIZE 10.6 X 3.86 X 5.75

- CLASS A LOW NOISE PREAMP / CLASS D POWER AMPLIFIER
- 2 INPUTS FOR ACTIVE OR PASSIVE BASSES
- INDEPENDENT GAIN CONTROL WITH A SEPARATE MASTER VOLUME
- INDIVIDUAL 4-BAND EQ WITH /- 12DB OVER EACH BAND - BASS 60HZ LOW MID 800 HZ HIGH MID 2.5 KHZ TREBLE 10 KHZ
- INDIVIDUAL ADJUSTABLE COMPRESSOR WITH BYPASS FUNCTION
- MUTE SWITCH FOR EACH CHANNEL, SELECTABLE FROM EXTERNAL FOOTSWITCH
- LINE LEVEL OUTPUT
- DI OUT (BALANCED, XLR) WITH GROUND LIFT SWITCH
- FX LOOP
- LOCKABLE COAXIAL/QUARTER INCH TS COMBO SPEAKER CONNECTOR
- HEADPHONE OUT (STEREO) WITH INTEGRATED HEADPHONE AMPLIFIER
- AUX STEREO-INPUT, MINI JACK FOR CONNECTING MP3 PLAYER, CD PLAYER ETC.
- BLACK OR SILVER FACE: BLACK HOUSING WITH BUBINGA SIDES

FSC www.fsc.org FSC® C108987
EMAS
DIN 14001 DIN 18001
ISO 50001

ClimatePartner
climate neutral
Instrument | ID: 11117-1212-1002

WARWICK AMPLIFICATION

THE FIRST CARBON-NEUTRAL COMPANY IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY - FAMILY OWNED - SOLAR POWERED - SUSTAINABLY MANUFACTURED IN A GREEN ENVIRONMENT

WWW.WARWICK.DE WWW.WARWICK-DISTRIBUTION.DE
INFO@WARWICK.DE WWW.FACEBOOK.DE/WARWICKMUSICDISTRIBUTION

ROB STATHAM

ABOUT TIME

Ready for some metric modulation? Rob Statham gets his ruler out

This month I thought we might take a look at some metric modulation exercises. These challenge our senses of time and security when feeling different subdivisions. They can be used in two ways: firstly as a way of smoothly changing the overall tempo of a tune in mid-performance, and secondly as a polyrhythmic effect, implying two co-existing tempos.

The term metric modulation refers to a change from one tempo to another, wherein a note value from the first is made equivalent to a note value in the second. In order for this to happen smoothly, there needs to be an exact relationship between the two tempos, and a common subdivision must exist between them. This can be a very effective way to execute tempo changes, as opposed to ‘feeling’ a slower or faster tempo, as assuming that everyone in the band can feel the appropriate subdivision, then sudden and slick tempo changes become relatively easy to perform.

Example one demonstrates how this concept may be indicated on the music in order to effect an overall change of tempo. Here we have a bass-line consisting of quarter notes at a tempo of 105BPM playing a one-bar, minor-scale, repeated figure. At the third bar, the double bar line, we have an indication of a metric modulation, wherein the dotted quarter note from the first two bars is now equivalent to a quarter note in the subsequent bars. Thus there is a relationship that can be expressed in exact terms between the two tempos, namely that of three to two, with eighth notes being the common subdivision. This represents a slower tempo and, as can be easily discerned, it will be two-thirds of the original tempo: 70BPM.

But if we take the same bass-line at the same tempo, as in the example two, and this time maintain the original tempo even as we play the dotted quarter-note version of the figure, then we create a polyrhythmic effect, both tempos co-existing simultaneously. Try this with a metronome and you will appreciate how the dotted quarter-note version strongly implies the slower tempo, even as the metronome beats out the original tempo, creating a sense of rhythmic tension. It is important to ensure that you do not start to feel the implied pulse of the slower version as the primary pulse, as you will then have lost track of the original time frame. It is helpful if you have a metronome that enables you to accentuate the first beat of each bar, in order to help you keep track of where you are.

You will notice that the dotted quarter-note version of the figure fits twice into three bars exactly, which again indicates the ratio between the two tempos of three to two. Interestingly, you will find that if you play the dotted quarter note rhythm on just one note over those three bars it is easier to keep track of the original tempo. But as soon as you impose a figure that strongly suggests the slower tempo, then it becomes what I sometimes think of as the musical equivalent of the drawings of M.C. Escher, where two conflicting perspectives co-exist creating a sense of ambiguity.

View digital content here

Another effect that can be implied using metric modulation is the illusion of speeding up and/or slowing down by using a succession of modulations, moving progressively to either a smaller or larger subdivision. The *third example* demonstrates how this might work using a very basic idea, a root/fifth/octave pattern using a simple rhythm that is akin to a very basic kick and snare rock groove. In the first two bars this is played half time in relation to the given tempo of 100BPM, and then, in the third bar, the pattern modulates to using a half-note triplet subdivision, creating a speeding-up effect. To begin with, just isolate these four bars, changing from the half time figure to the half note triplet figure and back every two bars. You will find that as you play the half time figure you will already need to be feeling the half note triplets against that in order to transition smoothly to the triplet subdivision. Notice also that in two bars of the triplet subdivision you will be playing the figure one and a half times

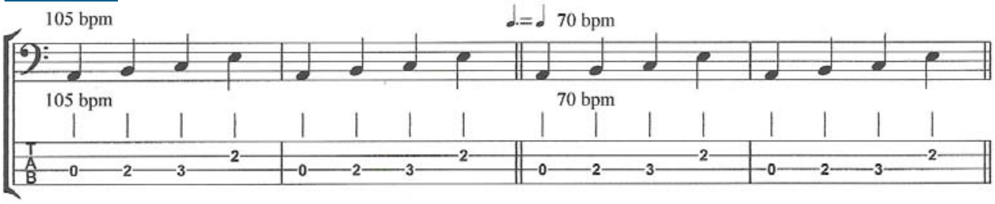
Extending your tone life

in that form, thus you can see that if you doubled the bars lengths to four you would be playing the figure three times exactly, something you might like to try with the whole exercise once it becomes comfortable.

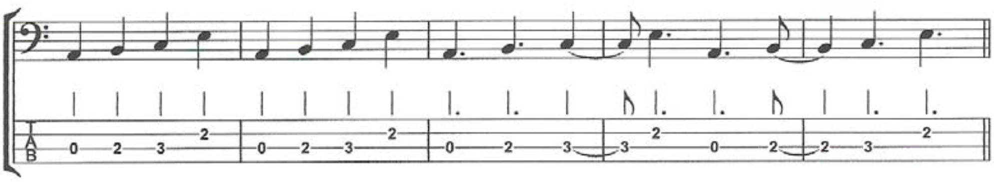
In any case, as written the exercise then moves to a quarter note subdivision in the fifth bar, at which point we are playing a straightforward 100BPM quarter note groove, as you might expect it to be played. But then at bar seven we modulate to a quarter note triplet subdivision, creating a speeding up effect. It is interesting here to compare the quarter note triplet version with the half note triplet version in bars three and four; you can see that it is essentially twice the tempo, the rhythm of the two bars in the half note version being condensed into one bar in the quarter note version. Thus, in two bars we play the figure three times in this quarter note triplet form.

And then lastly we move to a sixteenth note subdivision, at this point playing double time from the quarter note version starting at bar five. It would be conceivable, of course, to further modulate to a sixteenth note triplet subdivision, a variation you could try for yourselves ultimately. As we did with the first four bars, a good place to begin with this sort of exercise is to isolate each modulation and become comfortable moving back and forth with each change before attempting to put the whole thing together, but ultimately a good aim would be to be able to play the whole exercise forward and backward – speeding up and then slowing down – and also try it with four bars for each subdivision.

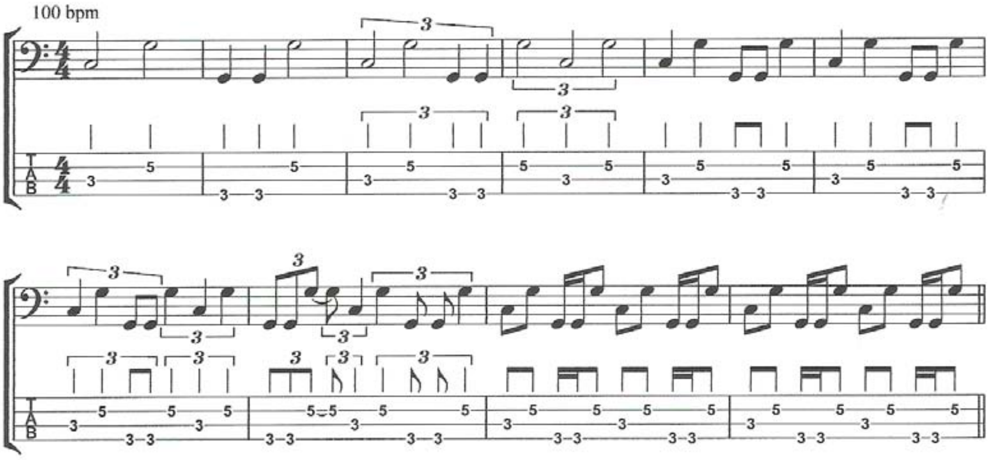
Example 1



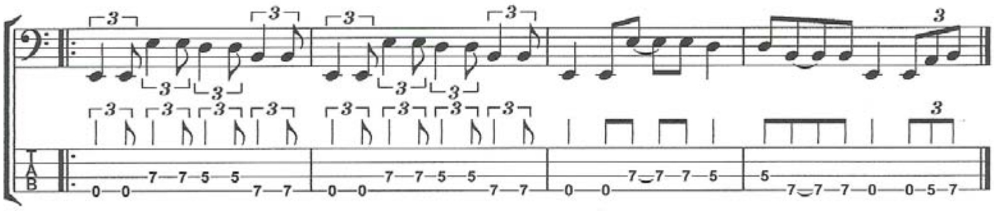
Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



Finally, I have written an example of how this idea might be used on a triplet shuffle groove to suggest a slower tempo. The first two bars are a generic blues shuffle riff in E, thus with an eighth note triplet subdivision which then moves to an eighth note subdivision in the third bar. This means that what was a one bar figure becomes a one and a half bar figure, and so I have written a triplet pick up to help facilitate the shift back to the triplet feel on the repeat, though this idea could, of course, be extended for as many bars as you like. When this becomes comfortable you could try dropping it in for various bars during a 12 bar blues, but you might want to warn the drummer before you do it in a rehearsal.

These exercises can be somewhat frustrating at first, but with time and care you'll get there and you will have enhanced and strengthened your security with different subdivisions in the process. ■

like no other string.

Elixir® strings

GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE • LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2013 W. L. Gore & Associates, (UK) Limited

SUBSCRIBE

TODAY AND CHOOSE YOUR FREE GIFT

WHICH DEAL WOULD YOU LIKE?

98 (OFFICE USE ONLY)

☐ **DEAL 1** 12 issues of Bass Guitar magazine plus a free set of Ernie Ball strings

☐ **DEAL 1** 12 issues of Bass Guitar magazine plus a free Guitarman tuner

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Please TICK the appropriate box below

☐ UK: £39.25 ☐ Europe: £51.00 ☐ Rest of World: £71.00

YOUR DETAILS

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS. All information is private and will never be disclosed.

Mr/Mrs/Miss ______ Forename ______

Surname ______

Address ______

______

County ______ Postcode ______

Daytime Phone ______ Mobile ______

Email ______ Year of Birth ______

PAYMENT OPTIONS

1 ☐ **DIRECT DEBIT -** Get 13 issues, **Annual DD** £39.25

blaze PUBLISHING LTD

DIRECT Debit

Direct Debit Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Service User Number | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 9 | Ref. No. (For official use only) ______

Please fill in the form and send to: Blaze Publishing Ltd, Lawrence House, Morrell St, Leamington Spa, Warks. CV32 5SZ

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the manager (Bank Name) ______

Address ______

______

Postcode ______

Account holder(s) name(s) ______

Branch sort code ______

Bank/Building Society account No. ______

INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY. Please pay Blaze Publishing Ltd Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction, subject to safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that the instruction may remain with Blaze Publishing Ltd and if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank or Building Society.

Signature ______ Date ______

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account.

CHEQUE/CREDIT CARD

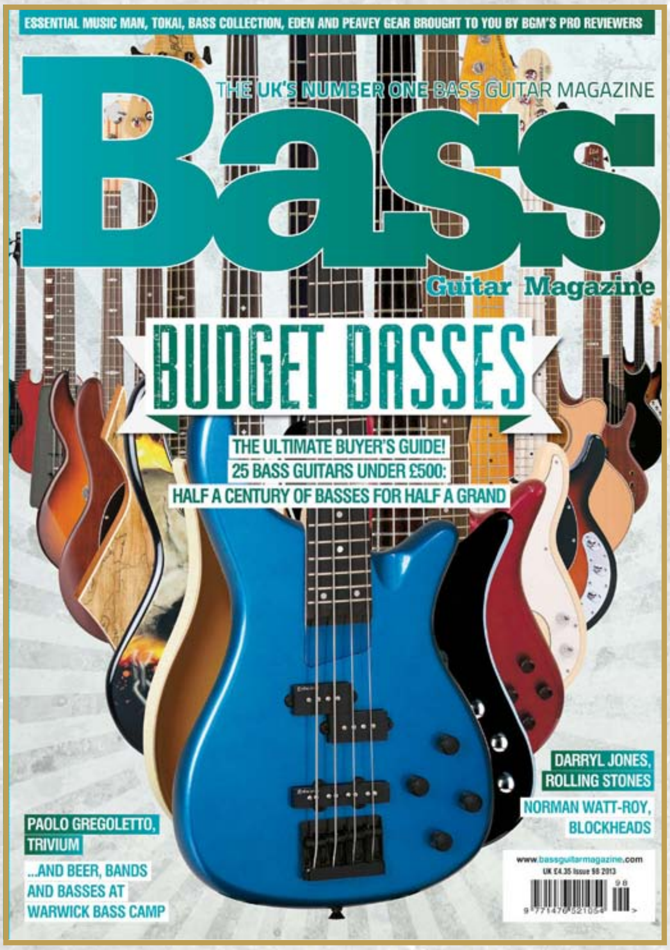
2 ☐ I enclose my cheque for the above amount made payable to Blaze Publishing Ltd

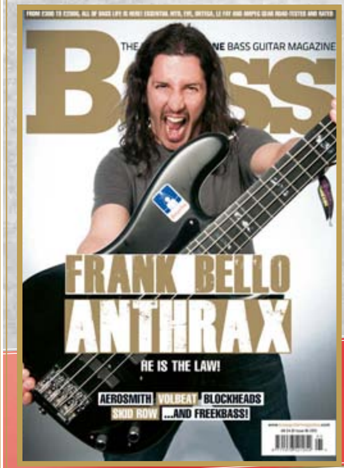
3 ☐ Please charge my ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Maestro ☐ Delta with the above amount

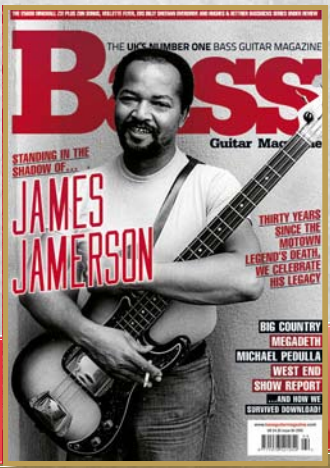
(Please no Amex)

Card number ______ Security code ______ START DATE ______ EXPIRY DATE ______

SIGNED ______ TODAYS DATE ______







RETURN TO: BLAZE PUBLISHING LTD
Lawrence House, Morrell Street, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5SZ

SUBSCRIBE TODAY
AND CHOOSE YOUR FREE GIFT

12 ISSUES OF BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE PLUS A FREE SET OF ERNIE BALL® STRINGS

DEAL 1

12 ISSUES OF BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE PLUS A FREE GUITAR MAN TUNER

DEAL 2

SUBSCRIBE BY DIRECT DEBIT TO GET A FREE ISSUE

NOW AS A DIGITAL MAGAZINE TOO

ORDER ONLINE AT WWW.BASSGUITARMAGAZINE.CO.UK
OR CALL OUR SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE ON 01926 339808

*OFFER OPEN TO UK SUBSCRIBERS TO THE PRINT VERSION ONLY AND WHILE STOCKS LAST

BASS BEYOND

FRANC O'SHEA

Bass theory guru Franc extends his teachings once more, this time into the tertiary zone

In this month's column I will be looking at extended chords including 9th, 11th and 13th chords. These are built using solely the tertian system, which means that each note is a third above the next. For example, we find that in order to decipher the complete set of notes available that can be derived from a heptatonic (seven note) scale, we need to look at the formula of 13th chords, as 13th chords encompass the entire range of the scale.

Since we create 7th chords from the first octave using the tertian system (1, 3, 5, 7) we need to include the second octave, utilising compound intervals, to derive upper extensions, which can be seen on the Interval Matrix in *example one*. However, since the tertian system employs only odd numbers, only 9ths, 11ths, and 13ths are needed from the second octave as demonstrated in *example two*.

As 9ths, 11ths and 13ths are equivalent to 2nds, 4ths and 6ths placed an octave higher, all the notes of a heptatonic scale are employed in a 13th chord. Bars one to four in *example three* demonstrate how to play 9th chords and, since 5ths are not used in these voicings, only the primary types of 9th chords, which would normally contain natural fifths, are shown. Bars 5 to 8 demonstrate the same chords in first inversion, and as 5ths aren't being used, second inversion chords are not included. Bars nine to 12 demonstrate voicings for third inversion with bars 13 to 16 demonstrating the same chords in fourth inversion. I haven't included 9th chords that have altered extensions, like flattened or sharpened 9ths, since you should be able to work these out yourself by either moving the 9th up or down a semitone to create the desired voicing.

What other ways can we portray the sound of 9th chords with just four strings, and what about 11th and 13th chords? Since 11th chords potentially include six notes and 13th chords seven, surely the bass is not capable of fully representing these sounds? Interestingly enough, a standard guitar can't play all the notes of a 13th chord as it only has six strings. Even though you can voice 9th, 11th and 13th chords on a piano, which at times may be the intended musical effect, sometimes using all the notes included in such expansive chords is undesirable and only certain key notes will be used to convey the overall colour of the chord, creating chords that are less dense while still preserving their general character. The standard bass guitar, with its intrinsic harmonic limitations, can still provide some of the flavour of these extended chords, which may be desirable not only for creating effective voice leading within more expansive sequences, but also for creating top-line melodies within progressions.

Example 1 The Interval Matrix, including Compound Intervals

1	♭2	2	♭3/#2	3/♭4	4	#4/♭5	5	#5/♭6	6/♭♭7	♭7	7
8	♭9	9	♭10/#9	10/♭11	11	#11/♭12	12	#12/♭13	13/♭♭14	♭14	14

Example 2 The Interval Matrix and the Tertian System

1			♭3	3		♭5	5	#5	♭♭7	♭7	7
	♭9	9	#9	♭11	11	#11		♭13	13		

So do I need to provide examples this month of what can be used to convey the sound of extended chords? It would take up several pages to do so, but I don't need to, since all the chords that can be used have appeared previously in my columns. The table in *example four* not only documents which chords can be used for 9th, 11th and 13th chords, but also provides a handy reference to which issue they appeared in. I have selected chords whose voicings include the key

View digital content here

elements from the first octave, which is primarily the root and the 3rd but can also include the 7th.

One exception to this is for 11th chords, where sus chords, which, although they contain no 3rds, can be used to portray their overall sound fairly satisfactorily, especially since the 4th and the 11th are equivalents and employing the 5th produces rich quartal harmony. You will note that in the column for 13th chords is included the suggestion for using triads that have the 11th and 13th added to them. In brackets you are referred to *BGM* 89 and 91.

The chords appearing in these columns are not labelled as 'triad add 9' chords, but are inversions of 7th chords. These 7th chords include the same notes you would use to voice a triad with added 11th and 13th extensions and are therefore synonymous. For example, a maj7th in second inversion where the fifth is on the E string, the root on the A string, the 3rd on the D string and the 7th on the G string, could quite easily be called a majadd11/13, where the root would be on the E string, the 11th would be on the A string, the 13th on the D string and the third on the G string.

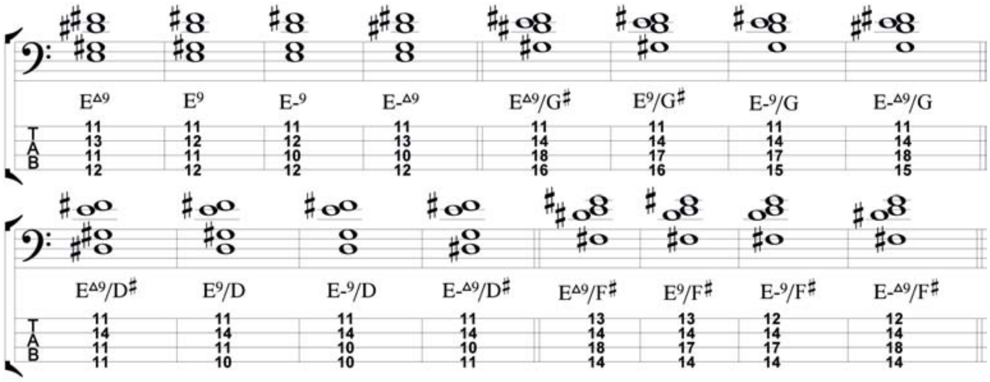
So what if you wanted to play all the notes of a 13th chord on the bass, how could it be done? Due to the aforementioned string limitations we are restricted to playing each note separately in sequence as an arpeggio. *Example five* demonstrates a G major scale harmonised with the appropriate ascending and descending 13th chord arpeggios built from each degree. The relevant mode/chord relationships are: G Ionian = Gmaj13, A Dorian = Amin13, B Phrygian = Bmin11b9b13, C Lydian = Cmaj13#11, D Mixolydian = D13, E Aeolian = Emin11b13, F# Locrian = F Half Dim11b9b13.

One method you can use to navigate these patterns is to visualise the triad that is associated with the current mode and then when you reach its 7th degree, play the 7th arpeggio for the mode that is prior to it. For example, in the first bar of *example five*, which would be G Ionian creating a Gmaj13 arpeggio, you would initially play a Gmaj triad. When you reach the 7th of the mode, which is the note F#, you would then play an F# half dim7 arpeggio, which is the 7th chord arpeggio associated with the Locrian mode – the mode that is before Ionian in the sequence. You can then continue using the same process for all the subsequent arpeggios.

I hope your brain isn't spinning too much by now and that you fully recover in time for some more advanced chordal madness next month.

Until then…

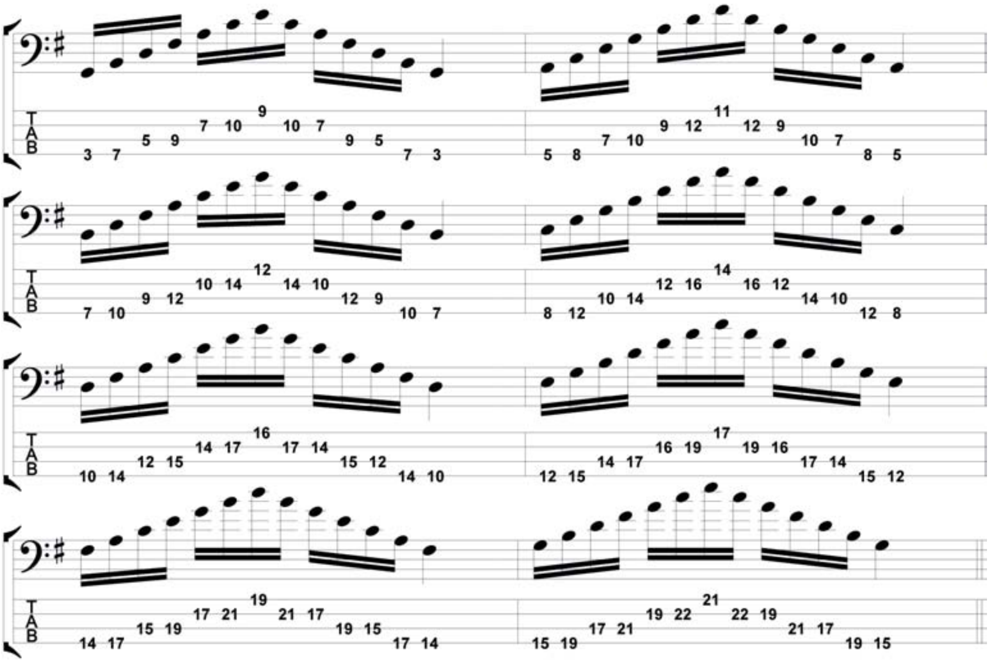
Example 3



Example 4

9TH CHORDS	11TH CHORDS	13TH CHORDS
9TH CHORDS (This column) TRIAD ADD 9 CHORDS (BGM 94/95)	7 ADD 11 CHORDS (BGM 97) TRIAD ADD 11 (BGM 94/95) TRIAD ADD 9/11 (BGM 96) 7 SUS 4 CHORDS (BGM 93)	6TH CHORDS (BGM 92) 6/9 CHORDS (BGM 96) TRIAD ADD 11/13 (BGM 89/91) 7 ADD 13 (BGM 97)

Example 5



DAVE MARKS

TECH TALK

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's superbassist Marks, here to add some zing to your shredding...

The last few months have been spent on a barrage of techniques, so this month, I'm going to pull things back a little. I want to discuss technique – to drop a little science and give you something to consider while you spend all of those hours shedding away.

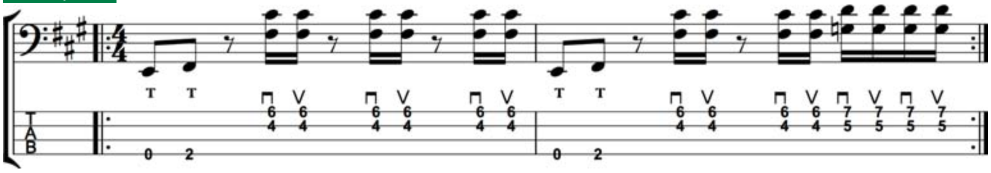
It's easy to get carried away in the how of technique. Building speed, strength, stamina and fluidity are all important. However, it's important to pause every so often and look at the reasons why we practise, and why we seek to improve our technique.

If I have an idea, it's my ability to physically articulate that idea that turns it from a thought to music. The better your technique, the less process there is between the thought and the sound – and that can only be a good thing.

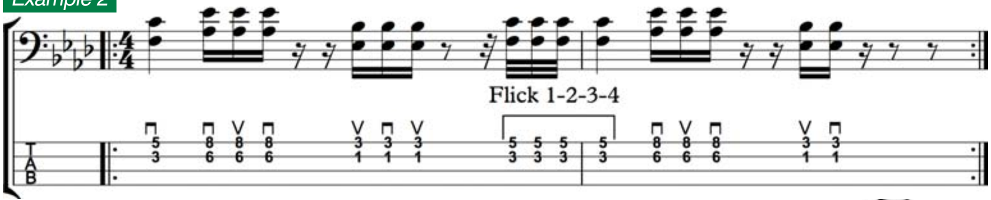
I remember when I was studying at college and indeed in the first few years after I left, I felt an enormous pressure to have a giant 'trick-bag' – an arsenal of flashy techniques that allowed me to play solo bass shows, deliver masterclasses and shred in bands. In recent years, I've failed to maintain some of those techniques, and although that may sound like a negative, it's actually been a very positive evolution. The main reason I've allowed my priorities to change is because my ideas are changing. If technique is simply the facilitator of an idea, then it shouldn't dictate the ideas… although a lot of people fall into that trap.

In your search to build a peronalised set of techniques, it's important to explore lots of different options, to discover those that create a sound which resonates with you. With that in mind, here's a few nice licks to explore using some slightly quirky techniques.

Example 1



Example 2



Example 3

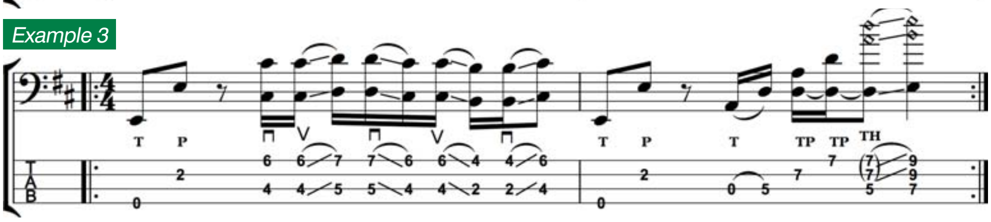


Figure one is all about slap and strum. Follow the guide closely for up and downstrokes so that your rhythmic feel stays consistent. Experiment with just fingers for both up and down (Stanley Clarke style) and fingernails on the downstroke, thumbnail on the upstroke for a more even percussive attack.

Figure two supercharges our strumming with a little flick of the fingers. At the end of bar one, ball up the fingers in your plucking hand and cover then with your thumb. Let 'em flick out 1-2-3-4 for a rapid-fire blast of notes with a flamenco vibe.

Finally, *figure three*: let's mix strums, slides and some tapping. Bar one isn't technically too difficult, but you really have to co-ordinate, so that each strum is immediately followed by a slide, creating a continuous flow of 16th notes. It sounds sweet when it's fast, but makes sure it's grooving at a slow tempo before you crank it up.

In bar two, we slap, we pop and then slap the open A string and hammer on with fingers one, then fingers three and four4 across the D and G strings on the 7th fret, giving you D-A-D.

Finally, TH stands for 'Tapped Harmonics' – so tap with your fretting hand (fingers one and two) 12 frets above (fret 19) and then slide your whole fretting hand up two frets. Now repeat until it sounds wicked. ■

Elixir® Strings for Bass:
An All New Playing Experience.
Elixir® strings
GORE, ELIXIR, NANOWEB, POLYWEB, GREAT TONE • LONG LIFE, "e" icon, and other designs are trademarks of W. L. Gore & Associates. ©2013 W. L. Gore & Associates, (UK) Limited

APPLY GENEROUSLY

NOT ALL CONSTRUCTIONS ARE CREATED EQUAL!

Every string in the **La Bella Bass RX** series is uniquely constructed for each set. This "Focused Set Design" concept helps achieve ALL the elements of a perfectly balanced set such as **TONE, FEEL, VIBRATO,** and **TENSION.**

WOUND WITH AMERICAN WIRE. MADE IN THE USA.

For more information and to see all our products visit
WWW.LABELLA.COM

ACOUSTIC SUBSCRIBE TODAY

THE UK'S ONLY ACOUSTIC GUITAR MAGAZINE

GET 12 ISSUES OF ACOUSTIC MAGAZINE PLUS String Swing Stylz Guitar Hanger

Get your Stylz™ hanger FREE with every subscription!

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND SAVE MONEY!

Get 12 issues of *Acoustic Magazine* delivered direct to your door and save over £24 off the full UK subscription rate

Put your personal style on display with a **Stylz String Swing Guitar Hanger**, giving a great solution to saving space. With four designs available** you can express your personality and combine *strength* with *durability* to keep your guitar *safe* and *looking great*.

SUBSCRIPTION HOTLINE 01926 339808

DAVID ETHERIDGE

UPRIGHT CITIZEN

Double bass warrior David Etheridge looks at extending the range with five strings

As most of you are by now aware, in the bass guitar market, five- and six-string instruments are increasingly common. They increase your available range on the bass, and are terrific fun. Go back to the standard four-string, and you find yourself going for that low Eb or D and swearing because it's not there.

Double bass players can have the same problem. An awful lot of classical music has written notes below bottom E. Some of this dates back to the time of viols, the predecessor of the violin family, where each instrument could have up to six strings (and frets), and you played even the smallest, violin-sized one on your lap rather than under your chin. Then in the 19th century there was some disagreement on tuning: some players preferred GDGD, others GDAD, and finally everyone settled on DGAE. Mind you, you'll still see low Ds and E♭s in symphonies by Elgar and Vaughan Williams, among other composers, dating back to those experimental days. Just to make things even more perverse, some players of the era were still using three-string double basses, tuned either GDG or GDA.

But in the 1880s things changed again. Composers like Wagner and later Richard Strauss were writing notes down to bottom C (an octave below

The Bob Norris conversion adds the low B's machine onto the opposite end of the G string tuner

Extending your tone life

A custom made five-string double bass

View digital content here

Note how the five tuners are separate on the headstock

cello low C) and expecting bass players to deliver the goods. A few enterprising players and builders developed five-string basses as a result. Some tuned the fifth string to low C, others went down to B to keep the fingering and tuning uniform across the range. There are, to my knowledge, two written bottom Bs in the repertoire: one in ‘Also Sprach Zarathustra’ (the theme from *2001: A Space Odyssey*) and the other in Respighi’s terrific tour de force ‘Pines Of Rome’.

As soon as I found out about five-string double basses I wanted one. When at music college I grabbed the college five-string and never looked back. Mind you, for the first three weeks I was playing on the wrong strings a lot of the time, until I got used to it. Exactly the same thing happened a few decades later when I got my first six-string bass guitars!

I’m including pictures of both mine and a friend’s five-string basses. Mine was originally a four-string, but converted using a Bob Norris conversion, where the low B machine is slotted onto the opposite end of the G string tuner. It’s a very neat and economical way of trading up to five strings. At the tailpiece end, the extra string hole is drilled in the middle to take the A string. My friend’s five-string was built from new and has five separate tuners and a five-hole tailpiece.

What’s the advantage of the extra string? Apart from the extended range, you also have the low notes that would normally be in the first few positions, so the E string now half way up the B string, so two octave leaps on five strings are now a matter of going up two positions and across five strings rather than leaping from 1st to 5th over four strings. Once you get into thinking of position work this way (crossing strings rather than tearing up and down the top string) playing becomes much easier.

Next month, we’ll look at four-string extensions. Until then. ■

I WANT TO PLAY LIKE…

PHIL LYNOTT

If Hendrix had played bass and lived in Dublin… Kev salutes the mighty Phil Lynott

KEVIN SANDERS

Fronting his band Thin Lizzy, Phil Lynott's huge stage presence, great voice and ferocious bass playing was the focal point for a band that gave us some of the best rock songs of the 70s. It took a while for Thin Lizzy to find their sound, but with the release of their 1976 album *Jailbreak* and the subsequent *Live And Dangerous*, Lynott and his band secured their place in rock history. His aggressive but melodic songs and distinct vocal delivery brought plenty of chart success, reinforced by a gruelling touring schedule. Eventually, friction within the band caused by a chaotic culture of alcohol and drug abuse reached unsustainable levels, and Lizzy broke up in 1983. Shortly after, Lynott put together Grand Slam, a band with great potential, but one which never really got off the ground, before he signed a solo deal with Polydor. He was never again to achieve the adoration he had enjoyed with Lizzy, a fact of which he was only too well aware: this no doubt contributed to his drug addiction. He was found unconscious by his mother on Christmas Day 1985, and died shortly after, aged only 36. In 2005 a statue of Lynott was erected in his home town of Dublin – there haven't been many bass players who have achieved that kind of folk hero status.

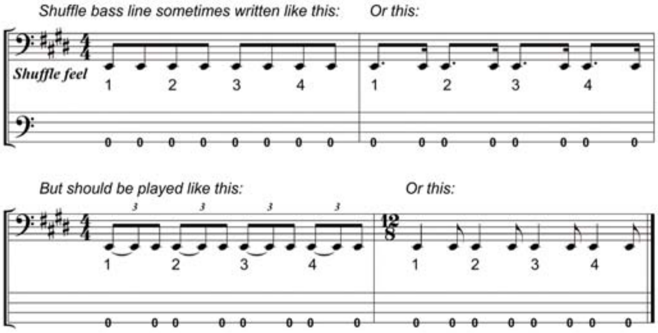
PHIL LYNOTT'S STYLE

Lynott was one of the best pick-totin' bass players of his era. For fast tempo shuffle grooves, he'd keep a relaxed right hand and, without anchoring his palm on the strings or bridge, play alternate up and down strokes with a wide movement, almost as if he were strumming an acoustic guitar. When playing like this, all but the string he was actually playing would be muted by his left hand. For slower parts (for instance the intro to 'Cowboy Song) he'd keep his palm against the strings just in front of the bridge and play predominantly downstrokes. He had a very correct left hand technique when playing faster passages, although when rocking out would always play with his thumb over the top of the fingerboard, dampening the strings with the third and fourth fingers.

As for Lynott's tone, take a stock Precision, put it through a big rig, crank up the volume and tone on the bass to the max while leaving the amp EQ flat, and hit the flatwound strings hard with a pick near the bridge. If only it were that simple. There's a lot more subtlety to Lynott's playing than is apparent at first glance, although the method I've just described is a good place to start.

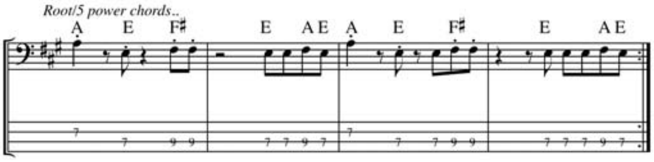
EXERCISE 1

Many of Thin Lizzy's biggest hits have a shuffle feel, including 'The Boys Are Back In Town', 'Don't Believe A Word' and 'Dancing In The Moonlight'. Remember that although it's nearly always written in 4/4 time, it's actually a compound time (where the beats are felt as triplets). It's worth taking a moment to make sure we've got this groove played accurately.



EXERCISE 2

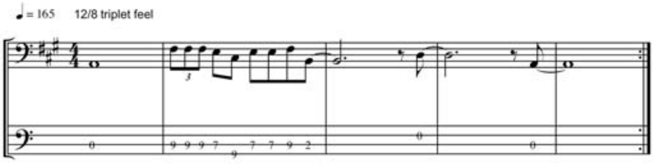
Here's an example illustrating the kind of bass/guitar unison staccato riffs that Lynott often used in Lizzy songs. If you play this with a pick (and you should), keep the picking strokes alternate down and up.



Extending your tone life

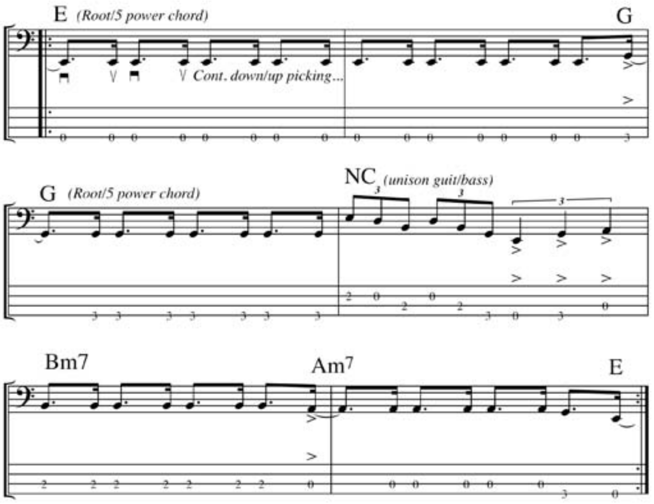
EXERCISE 3

Now try this riff, similar to the one at the start of 'The Boys Are Back In Town'.



EXERCISE 4

A technique Lynott used in a lot of songs was to have a sustained power chord 'pushed' from the last quaver of the previous bar on chord changes. This gives a real momentum to the song.

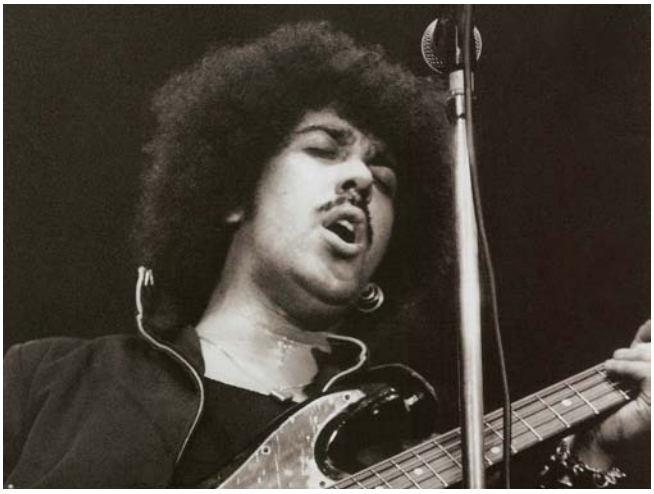


PHIL LYNOTT'S GEAR

This should be easy – Lynott played a black Fender Precision with a mirror scratchplate. Actually, before that iconic bass he played a series of instruments: a sunburst Fender Jazz, a couple of Rickenbacker basses and a Dan Armstrong Lucite. Soon enough, however, he'd settled on his 'bass for life' – that black, maple-necked Precision with Badass bridge, Dimarzio pickups and Mighty Mite mirrored plate. He actually used two similar instruments, one as described and the other with a rosewood fingerboard and stock pickups. Around 1980 Lynott started using Ibanez basses – an RS900 and a Blazer – and toward the end of his career he even used a Roland synth bass (with all the synthy bits removed). He also flirted briefly with BC Rich instruments.

When it came to his backline Lynott seems to have been a bit less choosy and Marshall, HiWatt, Ampeg and MusicMan rigs could all be seen behind him at times throughout his early career. Later though he settled on a stack of Dynacord BS412 1x15 combos – the stage volume must have been huge!

By preference Lynott would use Rotosound flatwound strings and occasionally plugged into a flange/phaser stompbox for songs like 'Waiting For An Alibi' and 'Dancing In The Moonlight'. ■



ESSENTIAL TRACKS

'The Boys Are Back In Town' *Jailbreak*
Not just one of Lynott's best – one of the best songs of the era.

'Sarah' *Black Rose: A Rock Legend*
Written with guitarist Gary Moore after the birth of Lynott's daughter, and more harmonically complex than your normal rock ballad.

'Dancing In The Moonlight' *Bad Reputation*
Produced by Toni Visconti and one of Lizzy's biggest hits. Nice bass intro: Fender P with a touch of flanger effect.

'Jailbreak' *Jailbreak*
Great song driven by guitar and bass unison riff. Try and find the 1976 *Top Of The Pops* performance – Lizzy at the top of their game.

'Cowboy Song' *Jailbreak*
Another hit from the Jailbreak album and a favourite at gigs. Nice moody guitar and bass intro.

'Freedom Song' *Fighting*
Nice pentatonic runs following the guitar parts from Lynott.

View digital content here

THINKING OF CHANGING YOUR BASS?
We can sell yours for you, or trade it in against a purchase.
We are bass maniacs that are a lot more price-friendly than most music instrument dealers.
We have an international customer base & take care of marketing, selling, payment, shipping etc.

Bass Gear are official dealers for Aguilar, Alleva Coppolo, Bergantino, Carvin, F-Bass, Fodera, Godin, Mark Bass, Mesa Boogie, Phil Jones, Ritter, Yamaha, Zon

Bass Gear

Showroom in Twyford nr Reading

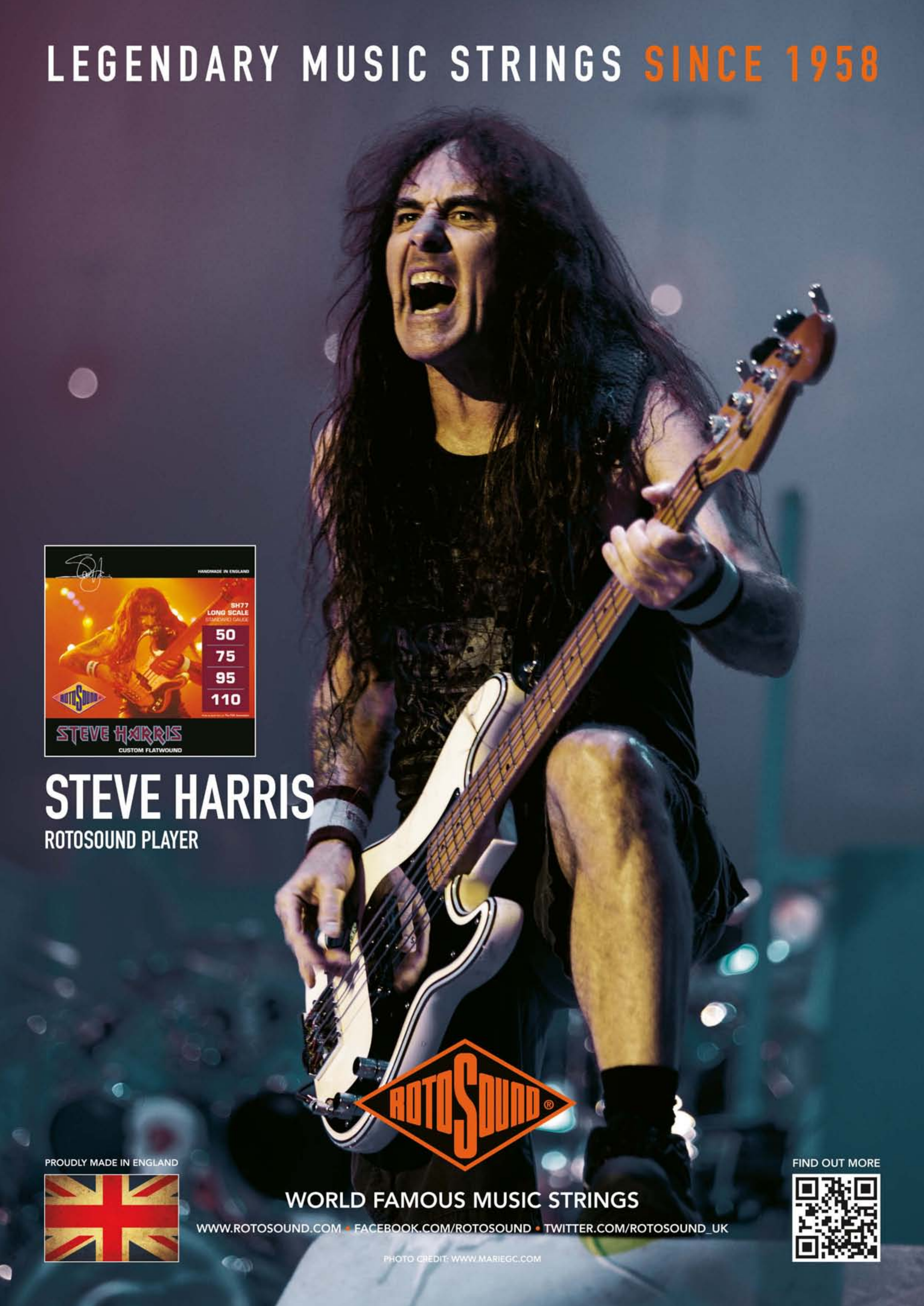
www.bassgear.co.uk | info@bassgear.co.uk
Tel:01189 706925 Open every day except Sunday

Advertising Index

Bass centre 2
Warwick 3, 77
Bass Direct 7, 9
Eden 11
Polar Audio 13, 59
Status Graphite 15
Musicians Union 17
TC Electronics 19
Andy Baxter Basses 21
Alliantz 29
John Hornby Skewes 30
Lean Business 30
Carvinwood 35
La Bella 38
Thomann 42, 43
Elixir 45
Barnes & Mullins 49
Radial Engineering 50
Strings & Things 55
Promanade 60
Fender 63
Music Guard 64
Sadowsky 64
Fat Boy Guitars 65
Skjold 65
MSL Pro 73
Sims Custom 91
Rotosounds 92

TO ADVERTISE HERE CONTACT HANNAH ON
01926 339 808
hannahb@blazepublishing.co.uk

ENFIELD GUITARS
Wanna play?
Lionheart
4&5 string
Basses
By
Martin Sims
Featuring
SimS
PICKUPS
GLOCKENKLANG
2-band active pre-amp
HIPSHOT
hardware
elites
Strings
£1'650.00
£1'850.00
Enfield Guitars Unit 20 Surrenden Manor Old Surrenden Manor Rd Ashford Kent TN26 3DL Great Britain
Tel +44(0)1233 822522 web:www.enfieldguitars.com email:martin@simscustom.com


LEGENDARY MUSIC STRINGS SINCE 1958
HANDMADE IN ENGLAND
SH77
LONG SCALE
STANDARD GAUGE
50
75
95
110
STEVE HARRIS
CUSTOM FLATWOUND
STEVE HARRIS
ROTOSOUND PLAYER
ROTOSOUND®
PROUDLY MADE IN ENGLAND
FIND OUT MORE
WORLD FAMOUS MUSIC STRINGS
WWW.ROTOSOUND.COM • FACEBOOK.COM/ROTOSOUND • TWITTER.COM/ROTOSOUND_UK
PHOTO CREDIT: WWW.MARIEGC.COM